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8-21-30

OUR GOVERNMENT

THE AMERICAN SCENE

THOMAS BEER

THE MAUVE DECADE
HANNA

HERBERT ASBURY

UP FROM METHODISM
THE GANGS OF NEW YORK

RALPH BARTON

GOD'S COUNTRY

JOSEPH HERGESHEIMER

SWORDS AND ROSES

OUR
GOVERNMENT

JAMES M. CAIN



19



30

New York

ALFRED · A · KNOFF

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To
E . C .

PREFACE

We live in an age that has abandoned theory, except when theory can be made to serve as working hypothesis, in favor of fact. No longer do we start with *cogito, ergo sum* as a basis for deducing the principle of the universe; no longer do we believe that the principle of the universe can be deduced, or even stated. We incline to table such profundities as this in favor of things more objective: instead of concluding, by syllogistic processes, that since the patient is insane he must have a devil inside of him, we study his symptoms, trying to find out something about them; instead of indulging in great debates about the fairness of the income tax, we study the minutiae of economic phenomena, accumulating great columns of tables; instead of saying *cogito*, and letting it go at that, we study ourselves, seeking to find out how we cogitate, if at all. In other words, science has become descriptive. It has lost some of the fine clarity that it had before, for many of its findings present riddles that appear to have no answers; but that was to be expected, for it could hardly hope to equal, once it began to muddy the waters with evidence, that fine crystal logic which is the exclusive possession of theology. The main point is that it demands the concrete now before it will proceed to the

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abstract. It will form no conclusion until the data are all in, with exact weight, measure, and specific gravity; it will hazard no opinion in the principle of the universe until it knows what the universe is like.

This little book represents an effort to make a beginning in this direction on behalf of our American government, perhaps the most baffling riddle of all. We have, heaven knows, no dearth of books on the theory of our government, on its functions, its virtues, and its defects. The libraries are full of such books, and the courthouses are even fuller, for every judicial decision is in some degree an analysis of these matters, and many judicial decisions are lengthy. But there is no book, so far as I know, which sets out to paint a portrait of our government; to depict, without bias or comment, the machine which passes our laws, educates our children, and polices our streets; to show the kind of men who man it, the matters that occupy them, and the nature of their deliberations. It was to fill this hiatus that I set to work. If I have made only a meagre beginning, I have the consolation that I have made at least a beginning. For if the field proves attractive to scholarship, and others take up the work where I have left off, the United States will be unique among nations. It will know not only what its government was intended to be, and what it ought to be, and what it might be if it were only better; it will know what its government actually is.

The work has glaring defects, as for example the

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lack of a chapter on the levying of taxes, the only function which all government has in common, and perhaps the chief reason for its existence. But many things had to be excluded simply because they did not lend themselves to my method of approach. That method has been to select some typical problem of a particular branch of government, usually on the basis of newspaper clippings, and then reconstruct the manner in which it would be dealt with by the typical agents of that branch of government. Of course, in one or two instances other methods were used. In the chapter on the military forces of our government, I was happily able to utilize an experience of my own, and give actual names, dates, and places; and in the chapter on Congress, which keeps a complete journal of its debates, reconstruction would have been supererogatory, for all that was necessary was to excerpt a few pages from the *Congressional Record* in order to give the reader a perfect picture of what a day at the Capitol is like. But in the main, the reconstructive method has been thought most practical, and I have accordingly used it; while it has its limitations, it was the best method, I believe, with which to achieve complete verisimilitude, which after all was the main desideratum.

My thanks are hereby tendered to Mr. H. L. Mencken, who gave me many inspirational talks when my interest flagged; to my father, James W. Cain, whose manipulations of legislators for college appropriations form the foundation of my political education; and to Messrs.

PREFACE

Charles Merz, Arthur Krock, Hamilton Owens, Herbert Bayard Swope, Walter Lippmann, Morris Markey, Gilbert Malcolm, and Philip Goodman, all of whom were kind enough to make valuable suggestions that were incorporated in the book.

J. M. C.

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CHAPTER I
THE PRESIDENT

CHAPTER I—THE PRESIDENT

The conference room of the Towanda Chamber of Commerce, Towanda, Ohio. It is about eight o'clock in the evening. Sitting with his feet on the conference table, smoking a cigar, is J. HUBERT WILES, secretary of the Chamber of Commerce. Presently there enter ROBERT QUINN, Chairman of the Towanda County Republican Committee, and WILLIAM P. HALL, principal of the Towanda High School.

MR. WILES

Well, boys, it was some big day.

MR. QUINN

Biggest day this town ever seen, if we do say it ourself.

MR. HALL

Oh me, oh my!

MR. WILES

Yep, it was one little old hot time in the old town. How many people do you suppose was there?

MR. QUINN

One of them paper men what was on the special with the President, he said he figured there was twenty-two thousand.

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MR. WILES

Think of that. Twenty-two thousand!

MR. HALL

And I hear those city reporters, when they figure on a crowd, can come within five hundred of it.

MR. WILES

But I say let's quit talking about the crowd. The crowd wasn't what made today what it was.

MR. HALL

Every one of those people could have stayed away and it wouldn't have made a bit of difference.

MR. QUINN

A fat chance of any of them staying away!

MR. WILES

Just think: He come here and made a speech — the President of the United States!

MR. QUINN, MR. HALL

[*Whispering*]: The President of the United States!

MR. WILES

And the T. C. of C., the little old Towanda Chamber of Commerce — brought him here.

MR. QUINN

The hell you say! The last I heard about it, the

THE PRESIDENT

Towanda County Republican Committee brung him here.

MR. HALL

Now men! . . . We don't want any argument about who did it.

MR. WILES

That's right, Professor.

MR. QUINN

Yeah, that's right. Only if the Chamber of Commerce thinks you can get the President of the United States to come here without some Republican politics getting mixed up in it, why the Chamber of Commerce is kidding theirsself.

MR. HALL

We don't want anything to spoil it. Why, everybody did a little bit. Look at me — the letter I sent him, signed by every school child in Towanda. I like to think that helped.

MR. QUINN

It did help. If you ask me, it helped a hell of a sight more than all this whooping and hollering what the Chamber of Commerce done.

MR. WILES

Well, brother, I just said we're not going to have any argument about who did it.

MR. QUINN

You said it, but you ain't said it so dam loud.

OUR GOVERNMENT

MR. WILES

Then I'll say it again and plenty loud: WE AIN'T GO-
ING TO HAVE NO DAM BUM ARGUMENT!

MR. QUINN

You fat mush, holler at me once more like that! I'll
give you a kick in the slats. And then you're dam right
we won't have no bum argument.

MR. HALL

Men, don't talk to each other like that. Not tonight.
Why, I've been looking forward to tonight, thinking
how we would all talk it over and feel good.

MR. QUINN

I see a back-slapping, lolly-gagging slob telling Bob
Quinn where to head in at.

MR. WILES

Brother, I'll ask you one thing: Have you got the co-
operative spirit?

MR. QUINN

No, I ain't!

MR. HALL

Well, I guess I'll be going.

MR. QUINN

Don't go, Professor. Stay awhile. Maybe I hadn't

THE PRESIDENT

ought to of flew off the handle like that. Set down and we'll do like you said. We'll talk it over and feel good.

MR. WILES

If the people of this town don't learn to all pull together for Towanda, I'm going to pull up stakes and go somewheres else.

MR. QUINN

Well, that wouldn't hurt Towanda none. How about you? You going to wipe that puss off your face and chew the rag awhile with the Professor?

MR. WILES

Because, look here, brother, I'm getting tired of doing all the work around this here town and not getting no appreciation. I don't have to stay in Towanda. I got an offer right now that might surprise some of this mossback element around here if I was to show it to them. I've took about all I'm going to take, and don't you make no mistake about it.

MR. QUINN

Well, say what you're going to do, fellow.

MR. WILES

I'm telling you, Brother Quinn, maybe you're used to having people let on they're going to kick you in the slats and then say: "Le's make up," but where I come from we don't do it that way. . . . Tonight, maybe

OUR GOVERNMENT

I'm willing to overlook what you just said to me. But I'm telling you and I'm telling all your friends: I got my feelings, same as anybody else.

MR. QUINN

Well, then, fix up your mouth, so it don't look so pussy.

MR. HALL

That's right. I certainly am glad to see you two make it up. Especially tonight. Because this thing today, it's — it's —

MR. WILES

It's tremenjous!

MR. HALL

It is. No less.

MR. QUINN

Or was, anyway.

MR. WILES

Ain't that funny? It's all over!

MR. HALL

All the time we took getting ready for it, and then it's over so quick.

MR. QUINN

What I say: the main thing is he's been here.

MR. WILES

That's right, Brother Quinn. That's something they can't take away from Towanda now. He's been here.

THE PRESIDENT

MR. HALL

That's something Towanda can hand down to its grandchildren. Men, do you realize that history was made today?

MR. WILES

You bet!

MR. QUINN

How do you mean, Professor? Course I know, when it comes to history, you know what you're talking about. But I don't quite get it.

MR. HALL

I mean this: from now on nobody can write a history of Towanda without he makes mention of this day.

MR. QUINN

Gosh! . . . Do they put the committee in them history books?

MR. HALL

Oh, I would think so. To tell who was in charge, you know, and who rode up with him from the station.

MR. QUINN

Hot dog, Wiles! Did you know you was going in a history book when you clumb in that automobile this afternoon?

MR. WILES

Say, when does this book come out?

OUR GOVERNMENT

MR. HALL

Well, I don't know exactly, but —

MR. QUINN

[*Playfully*] — Professor, you ornery little cuss. That's what you been holding back on us!

MR. WILES

What's that?

MR. QUINN

Why, hell, he's going to write the book hisself. That's what he's been trying to tell us, only we been so busy raising hell we ain't had no time to listen at him.

MR. WILES

Well, say, that's great! Professor, here goes with the number one congratulation.

MR. QUINN

Lay off of that stuff or here goes with the number ten foot.

MR. WILES

What's that, brother?

MR. QUINN

Nothing. I ain't said a thing.

MR. HALL

Of course, I have a lot of material already collected.

THE PRESIDENT

MR. QUINN

You bet you have.

MR. HALL

And this other book — it's away out of date.

MR. WILES

Would you believe it, that other book ain't got a thing in it about the Towanda Chamber of Commerce!

MR. QUINN

Yeah, I would believe it.

MR. HALL

So today, I thought — well, it was just so wonderful I made up my mind. I made up my mind I would write another history of Towanda county. And I made a kind of a special beginning. I got the original manuscript of his speech from his secretary, just before he left. [*He takes the speech from his pocket, slides it out of its envelope, and lays it on the table.*] There it is. Men, you're looking at a state paper!

[*The other two gaze at it curiously, occasionally touching it with their fingers.*]

MR. QUINN

We got to have that framed.

MR. HALL

Well, anyhow we've got to take action on it. But we

OUR GOVERNMENT

don't want to be in a hurry. We may want to put it in a vault.

MR. QUINN

That's right. We don't want to be in no hurry.

MR. WILES

And say: Wasn't — that — some — speech!

MR. QUINN

That speech just hit me right.

MR. HALL

That was the finest speech I ever heard in my life. Scholarly.

MR. WILES

That's it. Scholarly. I was trying to think of that myself.

MR. QUINN

And specially when you think how some of them does when they makes a speech. They gets up and tells a story about a couple of Irishmen and then says: "I thank you, friends," and that's all there is to it.

MR. HALL

What I liked was the way he covered his subject. Why, look at me. I'm principal of a high school and I'm supposed to know something about playgrounds. But I'm ashamed to say he knew more about playgrounds than I ever heard of. The whole history of them.

THE PRESIDENT

MR. QUINN

I like a good historical speech. You listen to it and then you got something.

MR. WILES

And Towanda! Say, he knowed all about Towanda. He even had it all down pat about the Battle of Three Forks Creek and everything. And, friends, I'm here to tell you when Towanda has got so the President of the United States can rattle off its history like that, then Towanda is on the map.

MR. QUINN

And I reckon the little old T. C. of C., what nobody ever hear tell of till year before last, is the one put it there.

MR. WILES

Hunh?

MR. QUINN

I say he sure did know about Towanda.

MR. WILES

He's a Big Man, brother.

MR. QUINN

All this talk that he ain't no Big Man makes me sick. I say any man in that job is a Big Man. The people of the United States know what they're doing when

OUR GOVERNMENT

they pick a President. . . . Say, Professor, which war was the Battle of Three Forks Creek in? I never did get that straight in my head.

[MR. HALL *does not answer his question. He has taken down from the shelves a volume of the New International Encyclopædia and is now reading it with obvious pleasure, nodding his head pleasantly from time to time.*]

MR. HALL

Here it is, under "Parks and Playgrounds." So far as I can see, it checks up exactly with what he said this afternoon. Read me that part of the speech where he talked about playgrounds.

[*They find the place and MR. WILES reads.*]

MR. WILES

"The practice of reserving public parks for the use and delight of the people seems to be as old as civilization. The Egyptians had parks from the earliest times. They were small and formal, ornamented with colonnades and other architectural features, and with sculpture. . . ."

[*He is about to read further, but MR. QUINN interrupts him.*]

MR. QUINN

What's the matter? Shut up, Wiles. . . . Say, Professor, what is it? I swear to God you look sick.

THE PRESIDENT

MR. HALL

Nothing, I guess.

MR. WILES

Here old man, have a drink. The genuine Towanda Springs, right out of the cooler.

MR. HALL

No, thanks. . . . Men, it's word for word the way it is in the encyclopedia. He didn't do a thing but copy it out of the book.

MR. QUINN

Well — ain't that acording to Hoyle?

MR. HALL

No, it's not according to Hoyle.

MR. QUINN

Well, say, that does make you feel kind of bad, don't it?

MR. WILES

I don't see nothing to make you feel bad. It can't be wrong, you know, if you get it out of the encyclopedia. And then another thing: what we liked most was what he said about Towanda. You can't get away from it. He sure did have it down pat about Towanda.

MR. HALL

Yes, but I just happen to think of something.

OUR GOVERNMENT

MR. QUINN

How do you mean?

MR. HALL

About a month ago his secretary wrote me for some books on Towanda. Said the President just wanted to make sure he had everything right in his speech.

MR. QUINN

Yeah?

MR. HALL

I sent him that other county history book, the one we were just now talking about, and the Chamber of Commerce book. And I just haven't got the heart to look in those books.

MR. QUINN

By ganny, if you ain't got the heart I have!

MR. WILES

Brother, do you call that a right way to act?

MR. QUINN

What do you mean, right way to act?

MR. WILES

I mean, when the President of the United States comes to Towanda to make a speech, I would think if you was really a booster you would be glad enough to

THE PRESIDENT

listen to it without doing too much sleuthing around to find out where it come from. That's pretty much like being a knocker, if you ask me.

MR. QUINN

Well, I ain't asking you. And if that's what you think, then what I think is: the gum-shoe stuff must be all right.

MR. WILES

Suit yourself, brother.

[MR. QUINN goes to the shelves and takes down *The History of Towanda County and Towanda, the City of Beautiful Homes.*]

MR. QUINN

Damn, but them books is thick!

[*He paws pages helplessly for a few moments, and then settles down to work.* MR. WILES watches him with stony disapproval; MR. HALL sits apart, staring dismally at the floor.

MR. QUINN

[*As he works*]—"The people of your fair city are renowned for their gracious hospitality, their unflagging industry, and their deep consciousness of all obligations of a civic nature." . . . That there sounds like some of that Chamber of Commerce bull. Yep, here it is. Le's see, that goes as far as page two. . . . Then it skips. "Although Towanda cannot

OUR GOVERNMENT

claim the beneficent auspices of antiquity, she nevertheless can claim a proud history reaching back to early colonial times. As early as 1732. . . ." Well, that come out of the history book, that's a cinch. . . . 1732 — 1732 — Here it is. . . . Holy smoke, he taken five pages that time! Well, that's a big hunk. . . . "Settlement began in earnest, however, when the expedition of Elias Peterson pushed westward along the Ohio in 1807. . . ." 1807 — 1807 — Here it is. But he only taken two pages that time. And say, that part has the Battle of Three Forks Creek in it. What do you know about that, Professor? It looks to me like that battle wasn't in no war.

MR. HALL

It wasn't. It was an Indian engagement.

MR. QUINN

Damn! I thought that battle was in the Revolution. . . . "The modern industrial era in Towanda began in 1903, when that far-sighted pioneer, Henry F. Burbage, whom we have with us today, built the imposing furniture factory which stands in the western section of the city." . . . I give you one guess where that come from. That's the little old T. C. of C. Yep — Henry F. Burbage, here he is, the old skunk hisself, with a wreaf around his picture like he was a saint. Well, thank God, he taken four pages that time. . . . [*Doggedly he works on, and after a time he slides the speech back into*

THE PRESIDENT

its envelope with a sigh of relief.] Well, so far as I can see, the only thing he made up hisself was "Fellow citizens."

MR. HALL

That's what I thought.

MR. QUINN

There's a couple of places where he changed it around a little bit, but it ain't no trouble to tell where it come from. The big slob!

MR. WILES

All right, brother. You've found what you was looking for and you've had your say. Now I'll ask you something. Suppose you was invited somewheres to make a speech. Suppose you took a long train ride and did what you was asked to do. Suppose you stood up in front of twenty-two thousand people and talked to them the best you could. And then, after you left, suppose somebody took your speech and found out you had used a couple of books writing it, and then held a knock-fest on you. How would you feel? Tell me that, brother.

MR. QUINN

I don't never make no speech.

MR. WILES

No, you don't ever make a speech. But somebody has to make the speeches. Else there wouldn't be any speeches made.

OUR GOVERNMENT

MR. QUINN

That wouldn't hurt the country none.

MR. HALL

A state paper. . . . I was going to give that speech to the boy that's leading the graduating class to speak at the commencement next month. I was going to give it to him tomorrow, so he could get it learned in time. Now I guess I'll give him something else.

MR. QUINN

If he's a smart boy and studied them books good, why he ought to know a good hunk of it already.

MR. WILES

Professor, I don't mind saying it, I don't like to hear that kind of talk coming from you.

MR. QUINN

What's that?

MR. WILES

I would think that the patrons of the school would want the children to be brought up with respect for our Chief Executive, and not none of this here Bolsheviki stuff mixed up with it.

MR. HALL

I've satisfied the patrons for thirty years. If they don't like the way I teach, I'll listen to them, not the Chamber of Commerce.

THE PRESIDENT

MR. QUINN

Anh-anh. And then, if the patrons don't like the way he teaches, then they got to take him anyhow. That's what we got a Republican Committee for.

MR. HALL

I thought he was a Big Man. . . . I said to myself: "There's a man that's fit to be President. . . ."

MR. WILES

I work my head off all the time, and all I get for it is a lot of knocks. . . .

MR. HALL

I thought I would write a book and have a footnote in it about what a masterly address he made and how the original copy is in the vault at the courthouse. . . .

MR. WILES

There's some places know how to treat a live wire, but Towanda's not one of them. . . .

MR. HALL

I guess I won't put that footnote in. I guess I won't write the book. . . .

MR. WILES

Who brought the Ajax Mill to Towanda? Who got the C., P., & O. to make Towanda a regular express stop? Who—

OUR GOVERNMENT

MR. QUINN

Dam if I know, and for the love of Pete shut up about it! Say, Professor, I just thought of something. Suppose the President didn't write that speech at all. Suppose he was busy, and that secretary done it?

MR. HALL

Why — that would change everything, wouldn't it?

MR. WILES

Brother Quinn, I believe you've thought of something. I just believe that's the whole answer. And I don't mind saying I didn't like that secretary a bit.

MR. QUINN

Why, it stands to reason. We all know he's a Big Man, don't we? Well, a Big Man wouldn't do no low-down dirty trick like that. That secretary done it.

MR. WILES

I don't mean to knock, you know. But why did that secretary keep pushing you away from the President, like you was trying to steal his pocketbook or something?

MR. QUINN

And then another thing: what the hell difference does it make if it *was* snitched out of the books? Why, them people out there today, they think he done a swell job if he didn't copy it out of the almanac.

THE PRESIDENT

MR. HALL

You know, maybe I'll write that history after all.

MR. QUINN

Why, sure you will. And you got to admit if he had said Sloan's Liniment was good for the itch it would of been a whole lot worse.

MR. WILES

Now we're coming on. That's what I've been saying all along, Brother Quinn. We get the old loyalty spirit, and then everything is all right.

MR. HALL

This makes me happy. Oh, it's been such a wonderful day.

MR. QUINN

The main thing is: He's been here!

MR. HALL

That's right.

MR. WILES, MR. QUINN, MR. HALL

The main thing is: He's been here!

CHAPTER II
CONGRESS

CHAPTER II—CONGRESS

*The Senate of the United States, April 13, 1928. THE VICE PRESIDENT of the United States is in the chair, and the usual Senators, clerks, stenographers, etc., are present. THE HON. JAMES THOMAS HEFLIN of Alabama rises and, after asking the clerk to read two extracts from the newspapers, addresses the Senate.*¹

MR. HEFLIN

Mr. President, some weeks ago the *Irish World*, a Roman Catholic newspaper, threatened the Democratic Party with dire disaster if it should fail to nominate Governor Smith, of New York, for the high office of President of the United States. That newspaper served notice on the Democratic Party that if it failed to nominate Governor Smith the Catholics would bolt the ticket, that they would not support the Democratic ticket to be nominated at Houston. This is an unbecoming threat and an un-American act. It violates every principle of American tolerance. It is in keeping, however, with the record of the Roman Catholic political machine regarding the National Democratic ticket. They bolted the Democratic ticket in 1916 because

¹ From the *Congressional Record*, Vol. LXVIII, Part 6, pp. 6358-61.

OUR GOVERNMENT

President Wilson refused to go to war with Mexico on behalf of the Catholic Church; they bolted the Democratic ticket in 1920, and in 1924 they bolted the Democratic ticket again. They have bolted the last three Democratic tickets. They are really not entitled to participate in a Democratic primary or convention or to have one of their number run as a candidate on the regular Democratic ticket.

They talk of intolerance. Mr. President, every time a redblooded American calls attention to the importance of preserving in their integrity the free institutions of America, not only do these Catholic periodicals assail him but they induce innocent and ignorant Protestants to do likewise.

Not long ago when I stood on this floor as an American Senator and exposed a Catholic conspiracy to destroy me politically because I had dared to oppose the Roman Catholic program of war with Mexico, the chairman of a Democratic club, so called, of Boston wired to the minority leader in this Chamber to have me read out of the Democratic party. Talk about intolerance and bigotry! There it is in its most contemptible and asinine form.

They do not stop with that. Thirteen Roman Catholic members of the Legislature of Massachusetts wired to the governor of my state and requested him to have the legislature of Alabama convened in extraordinary session to read me out of the Democratic Party because I had called attention to the pernicious, obnoxious, dan-

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gerous, and insidious activities of the Roman Catholic political machine. And now comes one of Governor Smith's cabinet members, one of his official family in the State of New York, and threatens to punish the Democratic South for daring to support whom she chooses for the nomination for President of the United States. I spurn these contemptible acts of Tammany, these miserable threats from the Roman Catholic political machine.

MR. CURTIS²

Mr. President.

THE VICE PRESIDENT³

Does the Senator from Alabama yield to the Senator from Kansas?

MR. CURTIS

I rise to a point of order. As I understand it, during the morning hour debate is limited to five minutes.

MR. HEFLIN

It is not.

THE VICE PRESIDENT

Not in connection with discussion on a conference report.

² The Hon. Charles Curtis of Kansas, now Vice President of the United States.

³ The Hon. Charles Gates Dawes of Illinois, then Vice President of the United States.

OUR GOVERNMENT

MR. CURTIS

As I understand, a conference report is not before the Senate.

THE VICE PRESIDENT

The Chair meant to say on a motion to concur in the House amendment to a Senate bill.

The five-minute rule only applies when bills are being considered on the calendar in the morning hour. Debate is unlimited on an amendment to a House bill.

MR. CURTIS

In the morning hour?

MR. HEFLIN

At any time when such a question is being considered.

THE VICE PRESIDENT

The five-minute rule applies when the Senate is considering bills on the calendar under Rule VIII. The Senator from Alabama.

MR. HEFLIN

Mr. President, the Democratic party is confronted with a strange—in fact with an extraordinary—situation. A new order of politics is now before us. A member of the official family of this New York wet Tammanyite, constitution nullifier, and head of the Roman Catholic political machine in America, goes down into Virginia, the mother of Commonwealths, the great old

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state that has furnished so many and illustrious Presidents of the United States, and serves notice on that great people that if the South does not bow down, truckle, crawl on her knees before Alfred Smith, the politically chosen and anointed of the Pope of Rome, the South is going to be punished by the Roman Catholics of the North. The sooner the stalwart Democracy asserts itself and repudiates such hideous and hateful outcroppings in her ranks, the better it will be for all concerned. I defy this mouthpiece of Governor Smith to carry out his threat. He is not speaking for anybody except his own church members, and I do not think he can deliver some of them, for I believe there is going to be an awakening amongst the rank and file of Catholics in America, because they realize that two standards are clashing in this country — the American standard and the Roman standard — and when they clash one of them has got to submit and go down, and it shall not be the American standard.

This intolerance and bigotry ought to be crushed out. The idea of a man who thinks he is big enough to run for the high office of President having one of his emissaries go down into the Southland, the section that furnished him who wrote the Declaration of Independence, the section that furnished him who sounded the keynote of liberty in the Colonies, the section that furnished that brave warrior who led the Continental Army and American liberty, and the section that produced him who wrote the Constitution of the United States — the

OUR GOVERNMENT

idea of having him go down into that State, the proud old Commonwealth of Virginia, God bless her, and tell that brave and chivalrous people: "If you southern people do not submit and fall in line with Al Smith, we will punish you. Through our members of Congress, Roman Catholics, we will vote against measures that will benefit your people in the South."

Was there ever such an exhibition of mean and bitter intolerance? I have never seen it, Senators. What are we coming to? Are the Democrats ready to turn this American Government over to such a régime? Mr. President, somebody is going to have to do a lot of explaining to the people at home after certain predicted things are pulled off at Houston. They are claiming now that the State of Arkansas has gone for Smith through a delegation picked recently by a central committee in that State. I am going to say to you that the people of Arkansas, in my judgment, are against Smith nearly 10 to 1; and if, by any hook or crook, that delegation is ever delivered to Smith at Houston, there will be a warm reception awaiting them when they return to the indignant Democrats of Arkansas.

The Smith machine claims 17 out of 20 of her delegates are for Alfred Smith; if that is true, Arkansas, in my judgment, has been badly treated, because the people of that State are not for Governor Smith. If they had a primary in that state I was going to enter as a candidate, but I have been deprived of that privilege because they have had no primary or convention.

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Arkansas is against Smith, as Alabama is against him; and yet they tell us that they are going to turn over Arkansas to him at the convention.

God help the Arkansas politicians who are in that deal, if such a thing is done. And now comes the startling statement that Oklahoma has been delivered to this man Smith, who is threatening the South through his henchmen, who is proposing to lash the South into submission to a political program that she spurns, threatening to punish her, to vote against meritorious measures that would bring benefit to her people, unless she bows her knee to the Roman Catholic, wet, nullifying Baal of Tammany Hall. Mr. President, thank God there is in the South spirit and courage and ability enough to care for her interests and protect and defend her honor always. She may be betrayed now and then in certain states, but she will punish the betrayers in the end.

Oklahoma: they say they have Governor Haskell on the delegation. He has lived in New York for years. I think he is a member of Tammany Hall. He has been in Mexico, and he has gone back down there for a visit, I understand, and has succeeded in getting on the delegation from Oklahoma, selected by a committee. The people had no chance to vote, no convention was held; it was a case of committee manipulation, and now they are claiming that Al Smith has Oklahoma. The rank and file of the Democrats of Oklahoma are overwhelmingly against Governor Smith.

Scandal lurks around Iowa, we are told. Meredith

OUR GOVERNMENT

threatens dire things about the crookedness and corruption employed there by the Smith crowd. Do you want me to tell you what I think?

I think the Al Smith campaign fund is the largest and most corrupt that has ever been secretly used in a Presidential race. They are slipping about quietly, noiselessly, putting out their campaign poison. They are employing secretive methods —

Whose silent courtship wins securer joys,
Taints by degrees, and ruins without noise.

That is what is going on.

MR. STECK⁴

Mr. President —

THE VICE PRESIDENT

Does the Senator from Alabama yield to the Senator from Iowa?

MR. HEFLIN

I do.

MR. STECK

The Senator spoke of claimed corruption in Iowa and immediately followed it by a statement with reference to a great amount of money or slush fund having been used. I hope he does not infer that the Democrats in Iowa have been influenced in the decisions they reached

⁴ The Hon. Daniel Frederic Steck of Iowa.

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in their county conventions by any great slush fund spent in behalf of any candidate for the Presidency.

MR. HEFLIN

I do not like the signs that I have seen. I have seen a lot of wolf signs over in that direction. My own opinion is that money was quietly used in Iowa, if the Senator wants to know my opinion, very secretively and insidiously used out there. I think it was used in Oklahoma, too. I think it has been used and is being quietly used everywhere they leave their foot tracks in a campaign for the Presidency. I believe that.

MR. STECK

Mr. President, will the Senator yield to me for just a minute?

MR. HEFLIN

I will yield for a minute, just for a statement. I do not want to yield for a speech.

MR. STECK

I have no quarrel with the Senator for expressing his convictions on any question. I do not want to raise any issue with the Senator; but I want to assure him, as a Democrat from Iowa, as one who has been in touch with the situation in Iowa, but who has taken no active part on either side in Iowa, that money has not been spent in a secret way or an open way or in any other way to any large extent on either side.

OUR GOVERNMENT

I will further say to the Senator, for the benefit of the Senator and of the Senate—

MR. HEFLIN

The Senator has said enough right now in my time.

MR. STECK

I have not quite finished. If the Senator refuses to yield—

MR. HEFLIN

The Senator does not know what has occurred in Iowa. If he learns to say “Iowa” like I say it, then I will yield to him. [*Laughter.*]

MR. STECK

If the Senator will permit an observation—

MR. HEFLIN

No; the Senator draws out that “Iowa—h” too long. [*Laughter.*]

MR. STECK

I was born in Iowa, if the Senator please. I learned to speak the name of Iowa when I was born. I know how it should be spoken.

MR. HEFLIN

Well, the Senator did not learn it right.

MR. STECK

It should be spoken “Iowah,” and not “Ioway.” There is no use of our quarreling about that, however,

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because that is something too small for us to quarrel about.

MR. HEFLIN

What I am objecting to is that it takes up too much time the way the Senator says it.

MR. STECK

As I understand, the Senator expects to take all the rest of the time up until 3 o'clock; so he should not object to my taking at least five minutes of it.

MR. HEFLIN

Mr. President, I cannot yield to the Senator further, because he said that he did not think this fund was used.

MR. STECK

I will say further that as far as my information goes I know that no slush fund was used in Iowa. As a Democrat of Iowa, I deny that any slush fund was used in behalf of Governor Smith or in behalf of Mr. Meredith to gain the delegation from Iowa. I think I know the conditions in Iowa. I am not quarreling with the Senator. I am merely saying that his information is probably not as direct or as good as the information of a Democrat from Iowa who has taken no part on either side of the fight.

MR. HEFLIN

The Senator is at least improving on the pronunciation of "Iowa." [*Laughter.*]

OUR GOVERNMENT

MR. STECK

May I say that the Senator has heard sung so much the old song which we sing, where we pronounce it "Ioway," that he thinks that is the correct way. [*Laughter.*] I suspect he has joined in singing the song many times, to the edification of the people generally, and to the glory of Iowa.

MR. HEFLIN

The Senator is so far away from Iowa that he does not know what happens day by day in Iowa [*Laughter.*]; but if the Senator keeps on defending Alfred E. Smith and the Tammany tactics, it will not be long until he can stay always in Iowa. [*Laughter.*]

MR. STECK

Mr. President —

MR. HEFLIN

Mr. President, I cannot yield to the Senator any more now. The Senator does not know what is going on in Iowa. They would not tell the Senator that they were handing these packs of money around. They are too smooth. They can teach the world how to distribute corrupt campaign funds. I repeat that in my judgment nobody has appeared in a political arena in the United States who can do it so secretively and effectively as the Al Smith bunch are doing it now; and I want to call on the Senator from Idaho (Mr. Borah) to reintroduce

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his resolution for the investigation of presidential campaign funds, and let us all call them down here, Democrats and Republicans alike.

I do not want any Democrat to buy this nomination. I do not want any Republican to use money to obtain the nomination or the election, either one of them. I want clean politics. The way to fight nasty, corrupt politics is in your party, and when you see the earmarks of corruption all around you cry out against it, and that is what I am undertaking to do.

I prefer to hear from Mr. Meredith, of Iowa. He is a man who is threatening to tell an interesting story about the Smith tactics in Iowa, and I want to hear from him. The Senator from Iowa does not know what is going on out there. They would not tell him what is going on. He is here. He springs very quickly, though, to the defense of this program in Iowa. Now, he has made his little explanation; let that stand.

Mr. President, I want this Borah resolution reintroduced, and we will pass it in this body and call these people before us, and start with Mayor Walker of New York City. He is the slickest eel in the pond. [*Laughter.*] Why, they are slipping into States whose Democrats are standing like Gibraltar against Smith, and yet they are picking up delegates for Smith in some of those states.

Senators, somebody is going to have to answer for these things.

CHAPTER III
STATE GOVERNMENT
THE GOVERNOR

CHAPTER III STATE GOVERNMENT

THE GOVERNOR

THE GOVERNOR'S office, about two o'clock in the afternoon. Ranged about the table, talking in whispers, are a petitioner for a pardon, dressed in ordinary clothes, but having a pasty pallor, a singularly close haircut, and a habit of starting nervously whenever he is addressed; two guards, carrying guns on their hips in holsters; a witness, a prosecutor, and counsel for the petitioner. THE GOVERNOR enters, accompanied by a woman secretary, and they all stand up until he has sat down and donned his glasses. In a moment a lovely aroma begins to perfume the air. It is such an aroma as pervades a bonded distillery, and unmistakably it comes from the head of the table, where THE GOVERNOR has taken his place.

THE GOVERNOR

Gen'lemen, y' may p'ceed.

COUNSEL FOR THE PETITIONER

Yes, Yexcellency.

THE GOVERNOR

'N I'll ashk y' t' be 's brief 's y' can, c'se busy af'noon w' me. Gi' me th' facksh, that's all I w'nt know. 'M plain,

OUR GOVERNMENT

blunt man, got no time f' detailsh. Gi' me facksh, 'n y' won't have t' worry 'bout fair trea'm'nt f'm me.

COUNSEL

I think I speak for everybody here, Yexcellency, when I say we're all anxious to save Yexcellency's time, and—

THE GOVERNOR

'Preciate 'at.

COUNSEL

And so I imagine the best way would be for me to sketch in for Yexcellency, briefly of course, the history of this case, I may say this very unusual case—

THE PROSECUTOR

So unusual, Yexcellency, that the Parole Board threw up its hands and refused to have anything to do with it whatsoever, and that is why Yexcellency's valuable time—

THE GOVERNOR

Nev' min' Parole Board. Is 't mer'tor's case, tha's all want know.

THE PROSECUTOR

I understand that, Yexcellency. I only wanted to say that the prawscution regards this case as abslutely prepawstrous.

THE GOVERNOR

A' right. Y' said it.

THE GOVERNOR

COUNSEL

Now, Yexcellency, this young man Greenfield Farms, this young man you see here —

THE GOVERNOR

One mom'nt. When's ex'cution take plashe?

COUNSEL

I'm glad Yexcellency reminded me of that, because praps I ought to have explained it sooner. Fact of the matter, Yexcellency, this is not a capital case —

THE GOVERNOR

Gi' me facksh, gi' me facksh! I got no time f' detailsh. When's ex'cution take plashe, I said.

COUNSEL

Yes, Yexcellency. I was only telling Yexcellency that there won't be any execution, because —

THE GOVERNOR

Wha's 'at?

COUNSEL

Because this young man Farms wasn't sentenced to death; he was sentenced to the penitentiary —

THE GOVERNOR

Oh!

COUNSEL

On a ten-year term, ten years in prison, for

OUR GOVERNMENT

participation in the armed march we had some years ago, when the miners made all that trouble. Or, as it's never been clear in my mind that Farms had any idea what he was doing at that time —

THE PETITIONER

Never did. I hope my die I just went out there to see what was going on —

A GUARD

Hey! Sh!

COUNSEL

Praps I should have said alleged participation.

THE PROSECUTOR

And another thing praps you should have said was that of his ten years in prison he has already served three and he'll get two more off for good behavior and that leaves five and five is a little different from ten.

THE GOVERNOR

C'me on, c'me on!

THE PROSECUTOR

I'm only —

THE GOVERNOR

Y' only pett'fogg'n. Shu' up.

COUNSEL

Now, Yexcellency will recall that as a result of that

THE GOVERNOR

uprising, six defendants, of which Farms was one, were convicted of treason to the State and the rest were allowed to plead guilty of unlawful assemblage —

THE GOVERNOR

Don't was' m' time talk'n 'bout 'at upris'n. I know all 'bout it. I 's right there 'n saw fi' thous'n of 'm march by m' own front ya'd. Get on 'th facksh.

COUNSEL

Then if Yexcellency is familiar with that, we're ready now for this witness, and after he has told his story I can outline briefly to Yexcellency the peculiar bearing it has on this case, and —

THE GOVERNOR

Is 'at witness?

THE WITNESS

Yes, sir.

THE GOVERNOR

Sit over here where I c'n see y' better. 'N don't shtan' 'n awe 'f me. Washa name?

THE WITNESS

Ote Bailey, sir.

THE GOVERNOR

Shpeak right out, Bailey. 'M plain, blunt man 'n y' needn't shtan' 'n awe 'f me.

OUR GOVERNMENT

COUNSEL

Now, Bailey, if you'll tell the Governor in your own words what you told the Parole Board —

THE WITNESS

Well, it was like this. I was coming down the street on the milk-wagon early in the morning, right down Center Street in Coal City, and it was cold and there was a thin skim of ice on the street. And the mare was a-slipping and sliding pretty near every step, because she was old and the cheap dairy company hadn't shod her right for cold weather. And —

THE GOVERNOR

Wha's 'at? Milk-wagon?

COUNSEL

Just a moment, Yexcellency. Now, Bailey, you forgot to tell the Governor when this was.

THE WITNESS

This here was twenty-three year ago come next January.

COUNSEL

All right, now go ahead and —

THE GOVERNOR

Hol' on, Bailey, hol' on. [*To COUNSEL*] Young man, I got worl' o' patience. 'M plain, blunt man, al's will'n t' help people 'n distress, p'ticularly when — p'ticularly

THE GOVERNOR

—p'ticularly—h'm—p'ticularly. But wha's twen'-three yea's 'go got t' do 'th 'is ex'cution? Tell me that.

COUNSEL

Well, Yexcellency, I thought it would save time if we let Bailey tell his story first, and then I can outline the bearing it has on this case. But if Yexcellency prefers, I'll be glad to—

THE GOVERNOR

Young man, 're you triffl'n 'th me?

COUNSEL

Not at all, Yexcellency, I—

THE GOVERNOR

I warn y' ri' now I won't shtan' f' triffl'n. Facksh, facksh, tha's what I want!

COUNSEL

Yes, Yexcellency.

THE GOVERNOR

A' right, Bailey, g' on 'th it. I'll see 'f I c'n get facksh m'self.

THE WITNESS

So pretty soon, the mare went down. She went right down in the shafts, and I seen I would have to unhook her to get her up.

OUR GOVERNMENT

THE GOVERNOR

Y' right, y' qui' right. Y' can't get 'm up 'thout y' unhook 'm. No use try'n. G' on.

THE WITNESS

So then I got down offen the wagon and commence unhooking her. And I just got one breeching unwrapped, 'cause they didn't have snap breechings then, when I heared something.

THE GOVERNOR

Whasha hear?

THE WITNESS

I heared a mewling.

THE GOVERNOR

Mewl'n?

THE WITNESS

That's right. First off, sound like a cat, but then it didn't sound like no cat. Sound funny.

THE GOVERNOR

What sound like?

THE WITNESS

Sound like a child.

THE GOVERNOR

Y' sure?

THE GOVERNOR

THE WITNESS

Yes, sir.

THE GOVERNOR

Sound' like child. Thank God, now 'm gett'n some facksh. G' on. What 'en?

THE WITNESS

So I left the mare, left her laying right where she was, and commence looking around to see where it was coming from.

THE GOVERNOR

Where *what* was com'n f'm?

THE WITNESS

This here mewling.

THE GOVERNOR

Oh, yes. Mewl'n. F'got f' mom'nt. G' on, Bailey. Shpeak right out. Don't shtan' 'n awe 'f me. What 'en?

THE WITNESS

So pretty soon I figured it must be coming from the sewer, what run right down under Center Street, and I went over to the manhole and listened and sure enough that was where it was coming from.

THE GOVERNOR

Shew'r?

OUR GOVERNMENT

THE WITNESS

Yes, sir.

THE GOVERNOR

Keep right on, Bailey. Y' g' me more facksh 'n fi' minutes 'n whole pack ' lawyersh gi' me 'n week.

COUNSEL

I assure Yexcellency—

THE GOVERNOR

Keep out o' this, young man. Y' tried m' patience 'nough already. 'M after facksh 'n 'm gett'n 'm. G' on, Bailey.

THE WITNESS

So I tried to get the cover offen the manhole, but I couldn't lift it. I tried hard as I could, but I couldn't budge it.

THE GOVERNOR

Busha tried?

THE WITNESS

Yes, sir.

THE GOVERNOR

Thasha shtuff! G' on.

THE WITNESS

So then I figured the best thing was to get some help and I run all the way up and down the street looking for a cop. And pretty soon I found a couple of them.

THE GOVERNOR

And first off they didn't believe it, but then when they come to the manhole and heared this here mewling, they tried to lift the cover with me, and all three of us couldn't move it, and why we couldn't move it was it was froze to the rim.

THE GOVERNOR

F'oze?

THE WITNESS

Yes, sir.

THE GOVERNOR

F'oze. G' on.

THE WITNESS

So then we figured the best thing to do would be to put in a alarm. We figured if we got the fire company down there, maybe they would have something to move it with.

THE GOVERNOR

G' on. Keep right on till I tell y' to shtop, Bailey.

THE WITNESS

So we went to the box and put in a alarm. And pretty soon here come the hook-and-ladder galloping down the street. And five fellows what was members of the Coal City Volunteer Fire Department was on it, because they was still setting in the fire-house playing a poker game what they had started the night before after supper.

OUR GOVERNMENT

THE GOVERNOR

The Coal City Vol'teer Fi' D'pa'ment?

THE WITNESS

Yes, sir. So then —

THE GOVERNOR

Wait minute. Wait minute, Bailey. Y' touch m' heart now. The ol' Coal City Vol'teer Fi' D'pa'ment, wha' y' know 'bout 'at? I was mem' that m'self. I was mem' that — le's see, mus' been thirty yea's 'go.

COUNSEL

I hear it was a wonderful company in those days, Yexcellency.

THE GOVERNOR

Won'ful 'n 'en some. We won State ca'nival three times runn'n. C'n y' 'magine 'at?

COUNSEL

You don't mean it, Yexcellency!

THE GOVERNOR

Well, well! Y' touch m' heart now, Bailey, y' cert'ny have. 'S goin' be ha'd f' me t' send y' t' chair 'f y' was mem' old Coal City Vol'teer Fi' D'pa'ment. G' on. What 'en?

THE WITNESS

— ?

THE GOVERNOR

COUNSEL

Don't sit there with your mouth hanging open like that, Bailey. The Governor was thinking of something else, of course.

THE WITNESS

Oh! So then them fellows pulled in their horses and got down offen the hook-and-ladder and commence hol-lering where was the fire. So we told them it wasn't no fire, but a child down the sewer, and then they got sore, because they claim we broke up their poker game and it was roodles.

THE GOVERNOR

What 'en?

THE WITNESS

So we ast them to help us get the cover off, and they wasn't going to do it. But just then this here mewling come again, just a little bit. It had kind of died off, but now it started up again, and them fellows, soon as they heared it, they got busy. 'Cause this here mewling, it give you the shivers right up and down your back.

THE GOVERNOR

What 'en?

THE WITNESS

So then we put the blade of one of them axes next to the cover, between it and the rim, and beat on it with another ax. And that broke it loose and we got it off.

OUR GOVERNMENT

THE GOVERNOR

What 'en?

THE WITNESS

So then them fireman put a belt on me, what they use to hook on the hose when they shove it up on them ladders, and let me down in the sewer. And I struck a match and sure enough there was the child, all wrapped up in a bunch of rags, laying out on the sewer water. And why it hadn't sunk was that the sewer water was froze and a good thing we didn't shove no ladder down there because if we had the ice would of got broke and the child would of fell in.

THE GOVERNOR

What 'en?

THE WITNESS

So I grabbed the child, and them fellows pulled me up, and then we all got on the hook-and-ladder and whipped up them horses for the Coal City Hospital, 'cause it looked like to me that child was half froze to death, but when we give it in to the hospital we found out that being in the sewer hadn't hurt it none and it was all right.

THE GOVERNOR

So y' saved child?

THE WITNESS

Yes, sir.

THE GOVERNOR

THE GOVERNOR

Tha's good! . . . Well, Bailey, y' made good case f' y'self. I don't min' say'n, 'm 'pressed.

COUNSEL

But this witness isn't quite finished with his testimony, Yexcellency.

THE GOVERNOR

Wha's 'at? He saved child, didn' he? 'A's all wan' know. Facksh, facksh, tha's what I go on!

COUNSEL

But Yexcellency —

THE GOVERNOR

A' right, a' right. G' on, Bailey, what 'en?

THE WITNESS

So then, when I got back to the milk-wagon and unwrapped the other breeching and unslipped the traces, the old mare couldn't get up nohow. She was stiff from cold, and I had to get them cops again and shoot her. So the dairy company was pretty sore. The old mare, she weren't worth more'n twenty-five dollars, but them company men let on I was hired to take care of the company property and not pull no babies outen the sewer.

THE GOVERNOR

What 'en?

OUR GOVERNMENT

THE WITNESS

So we had it pretty hot for a while, and then later on that day I went down to the hospital for to look at the baby and got them nurses there to name him Greenfield Farms, what was the name of the dairy company, so when they put it in the *Coal City News* about the baby being found, the company would get a free ad outen it, anyway twenty-five dollars' worth, what was the worth of the mare, and they did and we was square.

THE GOVERNOR

What 'en?

THE WITNESS

Well, I reckon that's all. 'Cepting I picked up the paper about six months ago, and I seen where a fellow name of Greenfield Farms had spoke a piece at a entertainment what they had in the penitentiary, and I got to wondering if it was the same one, and I asked one or two people about it, and they sent me to this gentleman here, and come to find out it was.

COUNSEL

So Yexcellency can see that this young man here, this young man Greenfield Farms, is one and the same with the child this witness pulled out of the sewer twenty-three years ago.

THE GOVERNOR

'N 'a's all?

THE GOVERNOR

THE WITNESS

Yes, sir

THE GOVERNOR

Well Bailey, don' min' say'n y' touch m' heart. The ol' Coal City Vol'teer Fi' D'pa'ment, wha' y' know 'bout 'at?

COUNSEL

Now' Yexcellency, you've heard the story of this witness, I may say the truly remarkable story of this witness, which I think Yexcellency will agree had the stamp of truth all over it—

THE GOVERNOR

The ol' Coal City Vol'teer Fi' D'pa'ment . . . !

COUNSEL

A story, praps I should add, that we are prepared to substantiate in every particular from the hospital records, which we will leave with Yexcellency, and I may call Yexcellency's attention to this certificate in particular, which states that the child was at least a month old when it was admitted, and—

THE GOVERNOR

Now wha's all 'is got t' do 'th pa'don f' Bailey?

COUNSEL

Farms, Yexcellency.

THE GOVERNOR

Farmsh, 'en?

OUR GOVERNMENT

COUNSEL

I'm coming to that, Yexcellency. Now the salient point about this evidence, Yexcellency, is that it establishes beyond any reasonable doubt in my mind that there is nowhere in existing records any proof of Farms's citizenship. He was, I remind Yexcellency, a month old when admitted to the Coal City Hospital. And what does that prove? It proves, Yexcellency, that he *might* have been born almost anywhere on the whole face of the earth. He *might* have been born anywhere from Greenland's icy mountains to India's coral strand. He is, so far as documentary proof to the contrary goes, Yexcellency that *most* unfortunate being, I may say that *pitiab*le being, who can claim *no* land as his own, being *nothing* more or less, Yexcellency, as the fellow says, a man without a country!

THE GOVERNOR

Well, well, well. I ashk y' f' facksh, 'n now y' begin shpout'n poetry at me. Man 'thout country, hunh? Tha's in'st'n.

COUNSEL

Now I remind Yexcellency once more that the crime of which Farms stands convicted is treason. And treason is unique among crimes, Yexcellency, in that before any man can be *convicted* of it, his *citizenship* must be established, beyond all *shadow* of doubt, because TREASON, Yexcellency, as all the AUTHORITIES agree —

THE GOVERNOR

THE GOVERNOR

Shtop yell'n!

COUNSEL

Yes, Yexcellency — implies a ALLEGIANCE — a allegiance to the State against which it is alleged to have been committed. And under the law —

THE GOVERNOR

Law? Law? Y' talk'n t' me 'bout law?

COUNSEL

Yes, Yexcellency, and —

THE GOVERNOR

Washa com'n t' me 'bout law for? Why 'nsha go t' court 'bout law?

COUNSEL

We've been to court, Yexcellency. We applied to the Supreme Court two months ago for a new trial, on the basis of the evidence which Yexcellency has just listened to, and which, praps I should have explained sooner, was not presented at the original trial because Farms had no idea at that time of the importance of his citizenship and neglected to inform me of the peculiar circumstances attending his birth. And the court denied the application, on the ground that while this evidence, if it *had* been presented at the trial, *might* have resulted in the granting of a motion to dismiss, it could not

OUR GOVERNMENT

properly be regarded as *new* evidence, as it is essentially evidence of *lack* of evidence on the part of the State, rather than *direct* evidence of innocence.

THE PROSECUTOR

In other words, Yexcellency is being asked to certify that if the dog hadn't stopped to scratch fleas he would have caught the rabbit.

COUNSEL

Not in the least, Yexcellency —

THE GOVERNOR

Y' know what? Y' both pair pett-fogg'n lawyersh. Y' 'sgrace t' bar. Farmsh! C'me here. I'll do this m'self. Sit there, where c'n see y'.

THE PETITIONER

Yes, sir. Thank you, sir, Governor.

THE GOVERNOR

A' right, Farmsh, shpeak right up now. Y' needn't shtan' 'n awe 'f me. 'M plain, blunt man 'n got heart 's big 's all outdoorsh. Washa got say f' y'self?

THE PETITIONER

Governor, all I got to say is I went out there when them miners was gathering by the creek forks just to see what was going on —

THE GOVERNOR

THE GOVERNOR

Thasha shtuff! Facksh! Motivesh! Tha's wha' want.
G' on, Farmsh. What 'en?

THE PETITIONER

And then when they marched down the road, I went along with them just for fun, and then two months afterwards, when they come and arrested me, I didn't have no more idea what they meant than the man in the moon, and —

THE GOVERNOR

Now we com'n. G' on.

THE PETITIONER

And then they sent me up. And — and . . .

THE GOVERNOR

Farmsh, now I ask y' some'n. If I was t' set y' free, what would y' do 'th y' lib'ty?

THE PETITIONER

If you was to set me free, Governor, the first thing I would do would be to go to the judge and get my citizenship fixed up —

THE PROSECUTOR

That's great! I'll say that's great! There you are, Yexcellency, right out of their own mouths! First this man isn't guilty because maybe the prawscution

OUR GOVERNMENT

couldn't have proved his citizenship. And the first thing he's going to do if he gets a pardon is to get his citizenship fixed up! If that doesn't —

COUNSEL

Not at all, Yexcellency. In fact, I resent the imputation of —

THE GOVERNOR

Shtop! F' God's sake shtop! [*To the Secretary*]
C'mute 'sen'ce 'mpris'nment f' life!

THE PETITIONER

What? Oh my God!

THE PROSECUTOR

Hunh?

COUNSEL

But, Yexcellency —

THE GOVERNOR

No more! 'M not g'n lis'n 'nother word! 'S comp'mise. 'S comp'mise, I know it's comp'mise. But 's bes' c'n do. Who y' think y' are, tak'n up my time way y' have? Don' min' f' m'self. 'M plain, blunt man 'n give y' shirt off m' back 'f y' need it. But my time b'longsh t' people. Y' und'shtan' 'at? My time b'longsh t' people, 'n wha' y' do with it? I ashk y' f' facksh 'n y' come in here 'th noth'n but tech'calitiesh! Tech'calitiesh I said!

THE GOVERNOR

Pett'fogg'n! Triff'n detailsh! Dog! Fleash! Rabbit!
Poetry! 'M done with it! 'M not g'n lis'n 'nother
word!

COUNSEL

But really, Yexcellency—

THE PETITIONER

Yeah, a fine lawyer you was. First you git me sent up
for ten year and now you git me sent up for life—

THE WITNESS

Yeah, and a fine thing the Coal City Volunteer Fire
Department done for the country when they pulled you
out of the sewer—

THE GOVERNOR

Wha's 'at? Wha's at?

COUNSEL

I'm just trying to tell Yexcellency—

THE GOVERNOR

Jus' minute, jus' minute! . . . The ol' Coal City Vol'-
teer Fi' D'pa'ment! Wha' y' know 'bout 'at? So Farmsh,
y' were memb' ol' Coal City Vol'teer Fi' D'pa'ment?

THE PETITIONER

Well . . . I reckon I was, in a way, Governor. I
reckon I was, ha ha! I reckon I was kind of born to

OUR GOVERNMENT

it, ha ha ha! I reckon I must be pretty near the only person in the world that was ever born to a fire department, ha ha, ha ha!

THE GOVERNOR

Farmsh, 'm g'n ask y' some'n. Look m' 'n eye, Farmsh. Farmsh, y' guilty 'r y' not guilty?

THE PETITIONER

Governor, I hope my die I ain't no more guilty than you are.

THE GOVERNOR

Farmsh, I believe y' tell'n' me truth. Farmsh, y' free man.

THE PETITIONER

Oh my Gawd, Governor, thank you sir, thank — !

THE GOVERNOR

The ol' Coal City Vol'-teer Fi' D'pa'ment. Wha' y' know 'bout 'at? Wha' y' know 'bout 'at? . . .

[While the Secretary makes out a pardon and the GOVERNOR signs it, the group breaks up in a round of hand-shaking, the lawyers to go out and have a drink together, the petitioner to go back to the penitentiary for the last formalities. When they have all gone, the GOVERNOR still sits nodding to himself, and presently falls amiably asleep.]

CHAPTER IV
STATE GOVERNMENT (Continued)
THE LEGISLATURE

CHAPTER IV

STATE GOVERNMENT (Continued)

THE LEGISLATURE

The third room on your left as you enter the south wing of the State Capitol. It is an afternoon in mid-winter, and three gentlemen, MESSRS. HAYES, LOMAN, and FRIEND, are sitting at one end of the table. They constitute a quorum of the Committee on Education of the House of Representatives, and before them is a large pile of bills, resolutions, and memoranda.

MR. HAYES

Well, looking at them don't do no good.

MR. LOMAN

It sure don't.

MR. HAYES

Might as well get busy.

MR. LOMAN

A hell of a fine time them other guys on this committee picked to get the flu!

MR. HAYES

How you say we do? Take up them schoolhouses, or leave them wait till we got a couple other things out of the way first?

OUR GOVERNMENT

MR. LOMAN

Leave them schoolhouses till last. They was referred jointly anyhow, and it ain't no use of us wasting no sweat on them till Ways and Means has said what they're goin' to do.

MR. HAYES

All right, then. Authorizing constable of town of Gale's Island to act as truant officer. Authorizing commissioners of town of Shawville to close certain streets to motor traffic during hours when public schools are in session. Them things don't amount to nothing and here's about forty more just like them. Shoot them right through, hey? Report them favorable and be done with it?

MR. LOMAN

Hell, yes.

MR. HAYES

All set on them, then.

MR. LOMAN

Pitch them over to one side. That's a start anyways.

MR. HAYES

All right, then. Le's get on this here Evolution Bill. Bill prohibiting the teaching of certain doctrines in educational institutions supported in whole or in part by public funds. What do you say on that?

THE LEGISLATURE

MR. LOMAN

I say that bill ought to been passed about ten year ago.

MR. HAYES

That bill hits me pretty good too. Still, it's pretty important, so I guess we better consider it some.

MR. LOMAN

What's the use of considering? I don't need no considering to know how I'm going to vote.

MR. HAYES

How you feel about that, Mr. Friend?

MR. FRIEND

Hanh?

MR. HAYES

This here Evolution Bill. We're getting ready to report on it now and we kind of want to make sure we got the right idea about it.

MR. FRIEND

Hunh.

MR. HAYES

So if you got anything to say about it, now is the time to say it.

MR. FRIEND

They hadn't ought to kill no cows thouten they pay for them.

OUR GOVERNMENT

MR. LOMAN

Now, what in the hell has the Committee on Education got to do with cows?

MR. HAYES

No, this ain't the Tubercular Cattle Bill. This is the Evolution Bill. Or Anti-evolution Bill, some of them calls it.

MR. LOMAN

Evolution!

MR. FRIEND

I ain't deaf.

MR. HAYES

You read it?

MR. FRIEND

Maybe I read it.

MR. LOMAN

He ain't asked you *maybe* did you read it. He asked you did you *read* it. Come on. If you ain't deaf, then act like you was awake.

MR. FRIEND

What's reading got to do with it?

MR. HAYES

Well, we're kind of busy this afternoon, Mr. Friend, and it would kind of save time if you had read the bill.

MR. FRIEND

I reckon I can read it if I have to. Where's it at?

THE LEGISLATURE

MR. LOMAN

You mean to say you been a member of this Legislature a whole month and attended all the hearings this committee has held and ain't read that bill yet?

MR. HAYES

Now, Loman, it don't do no good to get sore.

MR. LOMAN

No, but what does the taxpayers pay a bum like that for?

MR. FRIEND

All right. Where's it at?

MR. HAYES

Well, Mr. Friend, it's pretty late in the day to start reading the bill now. I reckon the best way is for us to kind of explain to you what's in it. Then you can tell us how you feel about it.

MR. FRIEND

I can read. But I ain't all the time bragging on it.

MR. LOMAN

I bet you ain't.

MR. HAYES

Well, le's see. Le's see now. Le's see how I can put it.

MR. FRIEND

I never seen such a place in my life. They can't never

OUR GOVERNMENT

do nothing thouten some man stands up and starts reading something. All the time showing off how good they can read. Up my way the people ain't got time for all this here reading.

MR. LOMAN

They can read them pain-killer ads though.

MR. HAYES

Well, first off, Mr. Friend, you know what this here evolution is, don't you?

MR. FRIEND

Maybe.

MR. LOMAN

You say maybe oncet more and maybe you stay where you're sitting and maybe you take a dive in that spittoon.

MR. FRIEND

Yeah, I hear tell of it. I hear the preachers talk about it plenty of times.

MR. HAYES

And you know what it is?

MR. FRIEND

Mister, go ahead and do your talking. Don't worry about me. I'll git the hang of it time you git done.

MR. HAYES

The main idea, the way I get it, is that men is descended from monkeys.

THE LEGISLATURE

MR. FRIEND

Hunh?

MR. LOMAN

Dam, it does break my heart to think of the people of this State paying out their money for this.

MR. HAYES

That men is descended from monkeys.

MR. FRIEND

De—?

MR. LOMAN

Aw hell!

MR. HAYES

Descended. You got a father, ain't you?

MR. FRIEND

Doggone it, come on and say what you're gitting at. I'm tired of all this here funny talk. All the time using big words. All the time talking and nobody can't tell what it means. Sure I got a father. How you think I got here if I didn't have no father? What you ask me that for, anyway?

MR. LOMAN

Just to be o'n'ry.

MR. HAYES

Keep out of this, will you, Loman? It's hard enough without no help.

OUR GOVERNMENT

MR. LOMAN

Why don't you go out there and talk to that tree?

MR. HAYES

Because the tree ain't on the committee.

MR. LOMAN

That's a dam shame.

MR. HAYES

Mr. Friend, we ain't giving you no funny talk. We're explaining this here evolution as good as we can, and we'd get along better if you would listen at what we're trying to tell you and quit all the time putting up a bum argument about how we're doing it.

MR. FRIEND

I ain't ask you to explain me nothing. Go on and do your talking. I already told you I'll git the hang of it time you git done. I ain't never seen nothing yet I couldn't git the hang of.

MR. LOMAN

If you was to get the hang of a manila rope, that would be a fine thing for the people of this State.

MR. HAYES

All right, you got a father. And you got a grandfather, ain't you? Or maybe had one?

THE LEGISLATURE

MR. FRIEND

All right. All right. Just keep on with your funny talk. All right, mister, now I'll ask *you* something. If I didn't have no grandfather, how would I have a father? How would my father of got here, hunh? Tell me that!

MR. LOMAN

That's a tough one, all right.

MR. HAYES

Loman, just as a favor to me, will you stay out of this and quit balling it up? All right. You want to get in it, you take him awhile. See what you can do.

MR. LOMAN

No, thanks. I pass.

MR. FRIEND

You can read so good, tell me that.

MR. HAYES

All right, Mr. Friend, you got a father and you got a grandfather. Now you're *descended* from your *father* and your *grandfather*, you got *that*? And your *father* and your *grandfather*, they're *descended* from *their father* and *their grandfather*, you got *that*? And so are *you* descended from their father and their grandfather, and *so on* and *so on*, you got *that*?

OUR GOVERNMENT

MR. FRIEND

I already told you I ain't deaf.

MR. HAYES

And then *evolutionists* says *men* is *descended* from *monkeys*.

MR. FRIEND

You quit hollering at me.

MR. HAYES

Hollering at you! Goddam it, I'll crown you with a brick in a minute!

MR. LOMAN

Who's balling it up now?

MR. HAYES

Well anyway, I ain't balling it up on purpose.

MR. FRIEND

All the time hollering at me. I ain't going to take no more of it.

MR. HAYES

Mr. Friend, did you hear what I just now told you about how them evolutionists says men is descended from monkeys?

MR. FRIEND

That's better, mister. That's a whole lot better. You talk to me right, I'll talk to you right.

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MR. LOMAN

You hear that, don't you, Hayes? Now you know where you get off.

MR. HAYES

Mr. Friend.

MR. FRIEND

Hunh?

MR. HAYES

Are we talking to suit you this way? Is this all right, the way I'm talking now?

MR. FRIEND

But that ain't how you was talking just now. You was hollering at me.

MR. HAYES

Never mind how I was talking just now. Am I talking to suit you now?

MR. FRIEND

And another thing, mister. I'll thank you to quit cussing at me. I ain't no mule.

MR. HAYES

All right, then.

MR. FRIEND

I don't allow nobody to cuss at me. You just as well understand that right now.

MR. HAYES

Where was I at?

OUR GOVERNMENT

MR. LOMAN

Where you was at was about them monkeys, but was you going or coming I wouldn't like to say.

MR. HAYES

Oh yeah. Them monkeys. Now, Mr. Friend, have you got it all straight about that? About how them evolutionists says men is descended from monkeys?

MR. FRIEND

Who says so?

MR. HAYES

Them evolutionists.

MR. FRIEND

Ev — ?

MR. LOMAN

I swear this is the worst crime I ever seen.

MR. HAYES

— olutionists.

MR. FRIEND

All right, mister, keep it up. Just keep it up. Some day the people is going to find out how things is run in this place. All the time showing off how good they can read. All the time showing off how many big words they know. All the time making speeches and using big words. I sit in that place over there every night for to help pass the laws, and then what? I can't never git the mean-

THE LEGISLATURE

ing of nothing. I can't never git the meaning on account of all them big words.

MR. HAYES

Well, it ain't no other word for these people we're talking about, Mr. Friend, so you just as well learn this one.

MR. LOMAN

That's it. Just take a week off and learn it.

MR. FRIEND

Why don't they talk so's somebody can understand them?

MR. HAYES

All right, Mr. Friend, we won't argue about it. We'll just forget that word and go on with what we're doing.

MR. LOMAN

What in the hell are we doing anyway?

MR. HAYES

We'll just say there's some people that says this here, and not bother about no name for them at all. Have you got it straight what they say now? That men is descended from monkeys?

MR. FRIEND

But I don't never git the right meaning of nothing.

OUR GOVERNMENT

MR. LOMAN

Well, that's tough, but don't let it worry you none. You got plenty of company. If them delegates ever found out what they was voting for 'stead of getting descended from monkeys they would get ascended up into heaven. 'Cause God is the only one knows, and even He ain't so dam sure.

MR. FRIEND

Monkeys!

MR. HAYES

That's what we're talking about, Mr. Friend. Monkeys.

MR. LOMAN

Monkey-de-monk!

MR. FRIEND

Ain't these people in this place got nothing better to do, mister, than think up a whole lot of devilment about monkeys? Don't they never do no work?

MR. HAYES

Never mind about whether they work or not, Mr. Friend. Have you got it straight about how men is descended from monkeys? Or supposed to be, anyhow?

MR. FRIEND

All the time thinking up some new kind of devilment. All the time showing off how good they can read. All

THE LEGISLATURE

the time showing off how many big words they know. Mister, what we talking about monkeys for, anyhow? Why ain't we talking about something that is some good? Why ain't we talking about is Flint Neck going to git their new schoolhouse?

MR. HAYES

We've been all over that, Mr. Friend. The bills on them schoolhouses was referred jointly to the Committee on Education and the Ways and Means Committee and we're postponing action on them until the Ways and Means takes up the money part, and then we'll consider the Flint Neck schoolhouse on its merits same as all the rest. What we're considering now is the Evolution Bill and I'll appreciate it if you'll get your mind on that so we'll maybe have something to show for our time.

MR. FRIEND

Let me tell you something, mister. I got elected for to git Flint Neck their new schoolhouse and I ain't got no time to set around talking about monkeys.

MR. HAYES

Loman, what in the hell am I going to do about this?

MR. LOMAN

I don't know. I never seen nothing like it in my life.

OUR GOVERNMENT

MR. FRIEND

Them people needs that schoolhouse, mister. They got hard times, and if some of them don't git some money working on the new schoolhouse I don't see how they're going to eat.

MR. HAYES

Because look here, Loman, if we don't get three to vote on it I ain't so sure we can report the bill out at all. Anyway not without a whole lot of jockeying around on the floor.

MR. LOMAN

That's the hell of it.

MR. HAYES

But how I'm going to keep this up I don't know. I ain't even got past the monkeys yet.

MR. LOMAN

If he ain't even got it straight about the monkeys he's going to have a hell of a time with the Bible.

MR. FRIEND

Hunh?

MR. HAYES

Nothing at all, Mr. Friend. We was just talking about how we could explain it to you a little better.

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MR. FRIEND

You was mumbling about that Bible.

MR. LOMAN

That Bible! It ain't only one Bible.

MR. FRIEND

It weren't my Bible! My Bible was in the house all the time!

MR. HAYES

Oh my God!

MR. FRIEND

And it weren't my still! I already told them it weren't my still! It was on my place but I never knowed nothing about it! It was 'way down by the creek!

MR. LOMAN

Anh-hanh. Anh-hanh.

MR. FRIEND

Lemme alone! Quit putting on me about that Bible!

MR. LOMAN

Anh-hanh. So you're the guy the Flint Neck Ku Klux was talking about last month, hey? Using a Bible to prop up the pipe with, where it run down from the still to the coil? Anh-hanh. Well, a fine delegate to the Legislature you turned out to be!

OUR GOVERNMENT

MR. FRIEND

Lemme alone! It weren't my Bible!

MR. HAYES

Loman, I swear to God I don't know which is the dumbest, you or this guy or the monkeys. Now look what you done. How the hell am I *ever* going to get this thing through his nut if you go on like this, scaring the hell out of him about his still? What do we care if he was running a still?

MR. LOMAN

No, but what gets me is a bum like that that gets elected to the Legislature and then they find a still on his place. And propped up with a Bible.

MR. HAYES

I don't care if it was propped up with a couple of Bibles and a hymn-book. I'm trying to get something done here and if you'll just kindly keep your mouth the hell out of it, maybe we'll get done by corn-planting time.

MR. LOMAN

All right.

MR. HAYES

You got a spare handkerchief? Thanks. I ain't sweat so much since I used to pitch hay.

THE LEGISLATURE

MR. FRIEND

Lemme alone! I'm going out of this place! I'm going home!

MR. LOMAN

Set down! Set down and quit that blubbering and listen at what Mr. Hayes is telling you or I'll take a poke at you. You hear me?

MR. HAYES

Now, Mr. Friend, I already told you about how them people says men is *descended from monkeys!*

MR. LOMAN

Monkeys — you get it?

MR. HAYES

And that there monkey stuff is *all crossed up with the Bible!*

MR. LOMAN

Bible — what you prop up your still with!

MR. HAYES

The Adam and Eve part, 'cause men couldn't be descended from *monkeys and Adam and Eve both!*

MR. LOMAN

Couldn't be descended from both — you get it?

OUR GOVERNMENT

MR. HAYES

So this here bill says they can't teach that stuff no more and then we throw out all the monkey books and buy new books in their place and *that's all there is to it!*

MR. LOMAN

That's all. Just buy new books and *that's all there is to it!*

MR. HAYES

So that's the bill *and now what do you say on it?*

MR. FRIEND

Lemme alone! I don't know nothing about no bill!

MR. HAYES

Mr. Friend, listen. It don't make no difference which way you vote, yes or no. 'Cause even if you're in favor of this here monkey stuff it'll be two to one the other way and all we want you to do is say yes or no for the record. Now will you please say *one way or the other, yes or no?*

MR. FRIEND

Lemme alone!

MR. LOMAN

Well, Hayes, there you are!

MR. HAYES

Loman, I'm going to report this guy to the Speaker. I don't know if anything can be done about it, but I'm

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going to find out. I'm going to report him at the night session. You're right. This here is a right down swindle on the taxpayers. Just think of it! A great moral measure like this here Evolution Bill being held up by a bum like that!

MR. LOMAN

They ought to send him back to Flint Neck. That's where he wants to go and they ought to let him.

MR. FRIEND

I'm agin it.

MR. HAYES, MR. LOMAN

What was that?

MR. FRIEND

I'm agin this here bill. Paying out a whole lot of money for new books and——

MR. LOMAN

Whoops!

MR. HAYES

By gosh we're done! He's voted, and he's agin it, and we're done!

MR. FRIEND

All the time paying out money for books. . . .
Reading. . . . Big words. . . . Monkeys. . . .

CHAPTER V
THE ADMINISTRATION OF
JUSTICE

COUNSEL

CHAPTER V THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

COUNSEL

A courtroom. It is filled with the usual judge, jury, defendant, prosecutor, counsel, widow of the deceased, bailiff, and crowd of spectators. THE PROSECUTOR has just risen to deliver his summation and now walks slowly to a spot within a few feet of the jury.

THE PROSECUTOR

Gentlemen of the jury, I now begin one of the most disagreeable, I may say thoroughly painful, duties that an officer of the court is ever called upon to perform. I come before you today, my friends, to ask for the life of a fellow citizen. I come before you to ask you to find a man guilty of murder, the gravest crime known to civilized society. My friends, it is indeed a painful duty. And as I have no desire to prolong it any longer than I have to, as I know you are all busy men, anxious to get back to your business, your families, your dear loved ones, I shall be as brief as I can. I shall confine myself to a plain recital of the facts, as revealed by the evidence, and then leave the case with you, confident that twelve men of such outstanding intelligence will not allow justice to miscarry.

OUR GOVERNMENT

Now, my friends, what does the evidence show? It shows first that the defendant Summers was not in the habit of going to church. That was his own affair, my friends. Whether Summers wanted to go to church or not, whether he chose to bow his head on Sunday or not, as you do and I do, I may say as any God-fearing man does, I don't care whether he's black or white or rich or poor, or whether he chose to abandon himself to a life of sneering, jeering, and contumacious *atheism!*—is a matter between him and his God. It is not for you and me to judge, my friends, whether Summers chose to go week after week, month after month, *year after year*, without once setting his foot inside the house of worship. That, I repeat to you my friends, is for *God* to judge. That is between *him and his God!* We're here today to decide whether he did, as the indictment alleges, kill Pete Brody, the husband of this lady here, the father of this little boy, this little curly-headed boy you see sitting here, willfully and with *malice aforethought!*

Now, my friends, what else does the evidence show? It shows that a great patriotic organization grew concerned about his welfare. It shows that the sober, God-fearing men that founded it, that nursed it in its infancy, that reared it with loving care until it is one of the greatest, yes, my friends, I will say the very greatest, force for good in the United States of America *today!*—that these very men gave their attention to Summers same as they would to any other man, be he

COUNSEL

rich or poor or Gentile or Jew or black or *white!* — that they gave their valuable time to his case and determined to see if there wasn't something they could do to bring him to the light, to bring him back into the house of God, to improve, for his own sake, for the sake of his family, his friends, his state, yes, his country, the state of his *spiritual welfare!* Oh, my friends, what a deed of kindness that was! What a act of pure, Christian charity! What more could you ask of any man, my friends, than that he do what them men done, that he give some of his *valuable* time for your *spiritual* welfare and *try* to bring you to the *house* of God, so maybe you would get some kind of salvation when you die?

Now, my friends, what did they do? The evidence shows that they got first into the official robes of their order, the hood and gown, my friends, of the Ku Klux Klan, marked with the *cross that Christ died on*, the cross that's leading the American nation out of the wilderness of false teaching and *on to better things to-day!* They got into this sacred regalia, my friends, and they got into automobiles and proceeded to this defendant's house. And then what did they do, my friends? They done a simple thing. My friends, they done a thing which, if it had been done to me, it would of broke me up *I don't care if I was the most hardened atheist this side of hell!* They sung him a hymn, my friends. They sung him perhaps the most beautiful hymn, my friends, that has ever been written by God-fearing men. Do you know how that hymn goes, my friends? I got no

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voice, my friends, and I never had no lessons in music. But I'll sing it for you. It goes like this :

[*singing*] Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee!
E'en though it be a cross
That raiseth me;
Still all my song shall be,
Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee!

That's what they sung to him, my friends. That beautiful hymn, "Nearer, My God, to Thee." Think of that! They gathered on his own front stoop, right under his window, and sung him perhaps the most beautiful hymn that has ever been written by God-fearing men. Did you ever know, my friends, that that was the favorite hymn of President William McKinley? It was, my friends, and in the year 1902, in Buffalo, New York, when that great man lay dying, when he lay dying by the assassin's bullet, what did he do, my friends? In the dead of the night, singing it softly to himself, he was heard to put his faith in that hymn. There in the dark, so low you could hardly hear him, he was singing it to himself :

[*singing*] Or if on joyful wing
Cleaving the sky,
Sun, moon, and stars forgot,
Upwards I fly,

COUNSEL

Still all my song shall be,
Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee!

And what then, my friends? Did the defendant Summers see the light? Was his heart touched by this simple act of kindness, this singing by these God-fearing men down there on his front stoop? Did he hear the message in that perhaps most beautiful hymn that has ever been written by God-fearing men, the favorite hymn of *President M'Kinley*? He did not! What does the evidence show, my friends? There was a shot! Another! Another! Still another! And another still! And when the smoke cleared away, Pete Brody was upon the ground. Pete Brody, the genial and affable Pete Brody that used to drive his milk-wagon through the streets in the early dawn, Pete Brody, the Pete Brody that brought sustenance to little children, Pete Brody, the husband of this little lady you see here, the father of this little curly-headed boy, *Pete Brody*, the friend of every man that ever knew him, be he black or white or rich or *poor*, *Pete Brody*, that never done a thing to any *man in his life!*—was lying on the ground, a load of shot in his stomach, doomed to die before he could even be brought to a *hospital!*

Oh, my friends, it is *indeed* a painful duty that brings me before you today. For I had rather lose this arm, this good right arm that you see here, than have to

OUR GOVERNMENT

stand here and admit that any citizen of the United States of America could be guilty of any such dastardly deed as Summers did that night. *Summers!* Summers, the man that would never go to church! Summers, the man that went week after week, month after month, year after *year*, without ever putting a foot inside the house of God or offering up a prayer for the good of his *soul!* *Summers!* There he sits, gentlemen of the jury; look at that face and ask yourselves is that man fit to walk the streets of our fair city or breathe our country's *air!* *Summers!* Summers fired those shots. Look at the evidence! What does it say? Out of his own mouth, gentlemen of the jury, we have it that he fired those shots, that he shot to kill or to maim or to work any *frightful havoc that might come!* That he and he alone was responsible for the death of Pete Brody and whatever judgment the death of Pete Brody may *bring!* *He* fired those shots! *Summers fired those shots!* Summers killed Pete Brody, and, before God, I say Summers must pay the price of his *crime!*

Self-defense! Against what? Against what? Against a hymn to the Lord God Almighty, my friends. Against God-fearing men, standing with bared heads on his own front stoop, singing "Nearer, My God, to Thee," the favorite hymn of President McKinley and perhaps the most beautiful hymn ever written by God-fearing men.

No, gentlemen of the jury! No, no, no! Summers must bring better evidence than that before he can escape punishment for his crime. *Summers* can perhaps escape

COUNSEL

punishment for not going to church. That is between *himself* and his God. But I tell you, gentlemen of the jury, as God is your judge, Summers must be made to pay for this dastardly crime that he committed when he shot at those men. *Summers* must pay! *Summers* must pay with his life! An eye for an eye! A tooth for a tooth! A life for a life! So spake that great God that you worship and I worship! So spake the God that *Summers refuses* to worship! So spake the great God on high, and I tell you gentlemen of the jury to alter by one jot or one tittle the word of the great God on high is something that neither you nor I dare do nor any other man, I don't care if he's rich or poor or Jew or Gentile or *black* or white. Murder in the first degree! *Murder in the first degree!* That is the only thing that will satisfy your oath, gentlemen of the jury! That is the only thing that will satisfy the *demands* of justice! That is the only thing that will satisfy the *word* of God! *Murder in the first degree!* Gentlemen, I ask you for that verdict! Gentlemen, I implore you for that verdict! For the honor of our fair state, gentlemen of the jury, for the honor of *your state and my state*, for the honor of *our fair country*, I ask you for a verdict of *murder in the first degree!*

I thank you.

[*He sits down.*]

COUNSEL FOR THE DEFENDANT

The defense rests.

CHAPTER VI
THE ADMINISTRATION OF
JUSTICE
(Continued)

THE JUDICIARY

CHAPTER VI
THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE
(Continued)

THE JUDICIARY

The same, a moment later. THE COURT wipes its glasses and turns gravely toward the jury.

THE COURT

Gentlemen of the jury, you have now heard the evidence and the argument of counsel. The court will now instruct you on the law, after which you may retire and consider your verdict.

The court instructs you that the defendant Summers is being tried under an indictment which charges murder in the first degree. On such an indictment the law permits you to return four verdicts. You may return a verdict of murder in the first degree, in which case you must satisfy yourselves that the defendant Summers intended to kill the deceased Brody and that he was actuated by malice prior to the act. It is not necessary that there should be a lapse of time between the formation of malice and the killing of the deceased. If you find that the defendant Summers intended to kill the

OUR GOVERNMENT

deceased Brody and that he was actuated by malice at any time before the act, then you should find him guilty of murder in the first degree. Next, you may render a verdict of murder in the second degree. This must embrace malice, but not intent to kill. If you find that the defendant Summers bore malice against the deceased Brody, but did not intend to kill him, then you should return a verdict of murder in the second degree. Next, you may return a verdict of manslaughter. This must embrace intent to kill, but not malice. If you find the defendant Summers intended to kill, but bore no malice, then you should return a verdict of manslaughter. Next, you may render a verdict of acquittal. Under the law, if there is in your mind a reasonable doubt that the defendant Summers committed the act described in the indictment, or if his act was justifiable, then you should render a verdict of acquittal. As the defendant Summers, however, does not deny that he committed the act described in the indictment, but denies merely that his intent and purpose were those described in the indictment, you must disregard reasonable doubt and render a verdict of acquittal only if you find that his act was justifiable. If you find, then, that the defendant Summers was justified in killing the deceased Brody, then you should acquit him.

The evidence shows that the deceased Brody was a member of an organization known as the Ku Klux Klan, and that he was in the regalia of this organization when he was shot by the defendant Summers. You are to disre-

THE JUDICIARY

gard all allusion in the testimony to the repute born by this organization, whether favorable or unfavorable, and confine yourselves strictly to the actions of such members of it as were present at the time when the acts described in the indictment were committed. You are to disregard all allusions to the religion of the defendant Summers. As to whether he was an atheist, or a Disciple of Christ, or anything else, you are not concerned in the least.

It is the plea of the defendant Summers that he shot in self-defense and that his act was accordingly justifiable. Such a plea is permissible under the law, and if supported by the evidence is ground for acquittal. In view of this plea, then, you must consider whether the life of the defendant Summers was actually threatened. To determine this, you must consider the actions of the deceased Brody and his companions antecedent to the acts described in the indictment. It is in evidence that the only act which they committed of which the defendant Summers became aware was their forgathering on his front stoop and singing a hymn known as "Nearer, My God, to Thee," a point on which he satisfied himself by peeping through the curtains before reaching for his gun. Before his plea can be allowed, then, you must consider whether the singing of the hymn "Nearer, My God, to Thee" by Brody and his companions constituted a threatening act. If you find that it was a threatening act, then you should acquit him. If you find that it was not a threatening act, and if you find that

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his shooting of the deceased Brody was in no other way justifiable, then you should find him guilty of whichever of the three crimes are open to you under the law. Are there any questions, gentlemen?

You may retire and consider your verdict.

CHAPTER VII
THE ADMINISTRATION OF
JUSTICE
(Continued)
THE JURY

CHAPTER VII
THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE
(Continued)

THE JURY

The jury room, a few moments later. The jurors, who are MR. GAIL, foreman, and MESSRS. HAGAR, BASSETT, ZIEGLER, FUNK, REDDICK, PETRY, LEE, DYER, PENNELL, MOON, and WEMPLE, file in and take to the chairs with which the place is provided, some sitting solemnly apart, some hooking their heels on the edge of the table which stands in the middle of the room, and still others camping within range of the cuspidor.

MR. GAIL

Well, men, le's git at it. What I mean, le's git a ver-dick quick, so's we can git out in time for supper.

MR. DYER

You said it!

MR. LEE

That suits me!

MR. REDDICK

You're dam tooting!

OUR GOVERNMENT

MR. BASSETT

'Cepting only that State's attorney tooken away all my appetite for supper.

MR. REDDICK

Me too. I never seen such a looking sight in my life.

MR. BASSETT

"For the honor of our fair State, gentlemen, for the honor of your State and my State, I ask to return a verdict of murder in the first degre-e-e-e!" And then all that whooping and hollering wasn't enough for him. Oh, no! He had to spit all over you.

MR. GAIL

The spit, it wasn't so good, but what we got to talk about now is the verdict.

MR. WEMPLE

Yeah, the verdict.

MR. GAIL

What we going to do?

MR. PENNELL

I kind of feel like we ought to hear what Mr. Petry thinks about it.

MR. PETRY

This is a hard case. This is an exceptional hard case.

THE JURY

MR. WEMPLE

This is the balled-uppest case I ever hear tell of in my life.

MR. MOON

How come that fellow to git killt?

MR. WEMPLE

What's the matter? Was you deaf you couldn't hear what them people was saying out there?

MR. MOON

I heared what they said, but seems like I can't quite git the hang of it.

MR. WEMPLE

Hunh!

MR. MOON

Yes, sir. Scuse me, sir.

MR. WEMPLE

Scuse you? Say, fellow, what ails you, anyhow?

MR. MOON

Yes, sir. I ain't quite got it straight yet, like of that.

MR. WEMPLE

Well, for the love of Mike, quit looking like the police was after you every time I look at you. . . . Which is the part you don't understand?

OUR GOVERNMENT

MR. MOON

About the singing.

MR. WEMPLE

Why, there wasn't nothing to that. That there was to fill him with the holy fire.

MR. MOON

Oh yeah. Thank you, sir, Mr. Wemple. Oh yeah. The holy fire.

MR. PETRY

I expect you better explain how it was, Mr. Wemple. Anyway, as good as you can. 'Cause this man don't act like he was so bright nohow, and maybe it wouldn't hurt the rest of us none if we was to kind of go over it once more, just to git it all straight.

MR. PENNELL

If Mr. Petry, he feels like he's got to hear it oncet more, then I reckon we all better hear it.

MR. WEMPLE

Well, the way I git it, this here Summers, what they got on trial, he wouldn't never go to church.

MR. FUNK

'Cepting only he's a Disciples of Christ and there ain't no Disciples church nowhere around here.

THE JURY

MR. WEMPLE

Well, one thing at a time. Whatever the hell he's a disciples of, he wouldn't never go to church. So the Ku Klux got it in their head to go out to his place and try to bring him around.

MR. FUNK

It wasn't no such thing. They was sore at him 'cause he went to work and boughten hisself a disk harrow offen the mail-order house 'stead of down at the store.

MR. WEMPLE

Well then, dam it to hell, you know so much about it, suppose *you* tell it!

MR. REDDICK, MR. BASSETT, MR. ZIEGLER

Let the man talk!

MR. FUNK

All right. But why don't he tell it right?

MR. WEMPLE

I'm trying to tell what them witnesses said. After we git that all straight, why then maybe we can figure the fine points on how much they was lying.

MR. PETRY

I think Mr. Wemple's telling it the way most of us heard it.

OUR GOVERNMENT

MR. WEMPLE

So they went out to his place, this here Brody what got killt and five other of them, all dressed up in them nightgowns.

MR. ZIEGLER

And got it in the neck.

MR. WEMPLE

In the neck and the funny-bone and the seat of the pants and a couple of other places where maybe they're picking the shot out yet. 'Cause this here Summers, he ain't only boughten hisself a disk harrow offen the mail-order house, but a twelve-gauge, single-barrel, six-shot pump-gun too. And when they commence bearing down on the close harmony, what he done to them was a plenty.

MR. LEE

I swear I never heared the beat of that in all my life. Idea of going to a man's house three o'clock in the morn-ing and commence singing right on his front stoop!

MR. DYER

And "Nearer, My God, to Thee"!

MR. REDDICK

They was a hell of a sight nearer than they figured on.

MR. WEMPLE

And Brody, he got it in about all the places there

THE JURY

was, and in the middle of the stummick too, and he bled to death. So he come about as near as he's going to git. So that's how come he got killt.

MR. PETRY (*to* MR. MOON)

Do you understand now?

MR. MOON

Oh yeah, oh yeah. Anyways, a whole lot better. Thank you, sir. Thank you, Mr. Wemple.

MR. GAIL

Well, men, what are we going to do?

MR. WEMPLE

That there is a question. . . . Mind, I ain't afraid of the Ku Klux. If this here Brody was in it, and this here Summers what killed him had the right on his side, I'd turn Summers loose just as quick as I would anybody.

MR. GAIL, MR. HAGAR, MR. LEE, MR. DYER, MR. ZIEGLER, MR. REDDICK, MR. FUNK, MR. PENNELL

Me too! I ain't afraid of no Ku Klux!

MR. PETRY

Mr. Wemple, I don't believe there's a man in this room that's afraid to do his duty on account of the Ku Klux. Unless —

MR. MOON

I ain't afraid of the Ku Klux. Not me.

OUR GOVERNMENT

MR. PETRY

Then I think that's one thing we don't have to worry about. All the same, I think it wouldn't hurt none if all of us was to remember that what goes on in this room ain't to be told outside.

MR. WEMPLE

That's understood. Or dam sight better had be. But what I started to say, we got to be sure this here Summers had the right on his side.

MR. HAGAR

Look to me like he did all right.

MR. FUNK

What I say, when them Ku Klux goes to take a fellow out, why don't they take him out or else stay home?

MR. BASSETT

That's me. I never seen such a mess-around-all-the-time-and-then-never-do-nothing bunch in all my life.

MR. ZIEGLER

And all this "Come to Jesus."

MR. HAGAR

And "Sweet Adeline."

MR. REDDICK

What's the good of that? Everybody knows what

THE JURY

they was there for. Then why the hell don't they up and do it thouten all this fooling around?

MR. FUNK

All the time making out they don't never do nothing 'cepting the preacher told them to do it.

MR. DYER

And then, come to find out, when they pick up Brody he had a strap on him looked like a trace off a six-horse harness.

MR. ZIEGLER

I reckon the preacher give them that for to beat time to the singing.

MR. MOON

That was to scare him.

MR. HAGAR

Yeah?

MR. MOON

Anyway, so I hear tell. That's what them Ku Klux said.

MR. HAGAR

Them Ku Klux sure can tell it their own way.

MR. WEMPLE

Wait a minute, wait a minute. . . . Moon, how come you heared all this what the Ku Klux said?

OUR GOVERNMENT

MR. MOON

They was just talking around.

MR. WEMPLE

I ain't asking you was they talking around. I ask you what the hell you was doing around them?

[MR. MOON *makes no reply. There is a general stir.*]

MR. FUNK

What the hell? . . .

MR. WEMPLE

Come on, Moon. Why don't you say something?

MR. PETRY

Why, what's the matter, Mr. Wemple?

MR. WEMPLE

Why, that simple-looking nut, *he's in the Ku Klux!*

SEVERAL

What!

MR. WEMPLE

Look at him, the lying look he's got on his face! Hell, no wonder he acted like the police was after him! No, he couldn't git it straight about the singing, 'cause they done filled him up with so much talk, he don't know is he going or coming! No, he ain't afraid of no Ku Klux, 'cause he's got a nightgown hisself already.

THE JURY

MR. ZIEGLER

But how about them questions?

MR. WEMPLE

I'm coming to that. Hey, you, why ain't you said something about this when they ask you them questions? When they ask you was you in the Ku Klux, how come you said you wasn't?

MR. MOON

Lemme alone! Lemme alone!

MR. WEMPLE

Quit that crying or I'll bust you one in the jaw. Now answer me what I just now ask you.

MR. PETRY

Let me talk to him, Mr. Wemple. Now, Mr. Moon, when them lawyers ask you was you in the Ku Klux, what made you answer no?

MR. MOON

I tried to tell them how it was, but they wouldn't let me say nothing. . . . That there man, he kept a-saying. "Answer yes or no." . . . I tried to explain it to them, but they wouldn't never give me no chance.

MR. WEMPLE

Chance? What the hell! Couldn't you say yes?

OUR GOVERNMENT

MR. MOON

They ain't tooken me in yet. I ain't never had the money. They won't take me in lessen I give them the ten dollars.

MR. WEMPLE

Well, I'll be damned!

MR. PETRY

I *never* hear tell of nothing like this in all my life. Why, Mr. Moon, don't you know that was perjury?

MR. MOON

I tried to tell them, but they wouldn't lemme say nothing.

MR. PETRY

Don't you know that when you take oath before the judge to tell the truth, you got to tell the truth else it's against the law? Ain't nobody ever told you that before?

MR. MOON

Lemme alone! Lemme alone!

[*There ensues an ominous silence, punctuated occasionally by MR. MOON's sobbing.*]

MR. BASSETT

So now every word what's been said in here, the Ku Klux knows it five minutes after we get out.

THE JURY

MR. ZIEGLER

This sure is bad.

MR. HAGAR

Moon, effen a juryman tells what he heared in the jury room, they put him in jail for five year.

MR. LEE

Ten year.

MR. DYER

And the penitentiary, not the jail.

MR. HAGAR

In the penitentiary for ten year. And he don't hardly ever come out. 'Cause before the time comes for him to git out, something generally always happens to him.

MR. MOON

Lemme alone! Lemme alone!

MR. FUNK

Aw hell, what's the use of talking to him? 'Cause that dumb coot, even if you could scare him deaf, dumb, and blind, why he'd blab it all around anyhow and never know he done it.

MR. BASSETT

That's the hell of it. And never know he done it.

MR. WEMPLE

What do you think about this, Mr. Petry? Do you think we better report this fellow to the judge?

OUR GOVERNMENT

MR. PETRY

I'm just a-thinking. I'm just a-thinking.

MR. WEMPLE

Well, while we're figuring on that, I reckon we better git up a verdict. This here look like second degree to me.

MR. FUNK

First degree, I say.

MR. REDDICK, MR. DYER, MR. ZIEGLER, MR. GAIL, MR.
HAGAR, MR. BASSETT

First degree, I say. Me too. This here is murder.

MR. WEMPLE

Well, I was thinking about first degree myself. 'Cause a Klansman, it stands to reason, he's as good as anybody else.

MR. LEE

He is that. When a man gits killt, something had ought to be done about it and that goes for a Klansman same as anybody else.

MR. HAGAR

Everybody alike, I say.

MR. BASSETT

And another thing, men, what we hadn't ought to for-

THE JURY

get. Ku Klux is a fine order, when you come right down to it.

MR. FUNK

I know a fellow what he's a kind of a travelling agent for the Red Men. He got something to do with the insurance, I think it is, and believe me he's got it down pat about every kind of a order they is going. And he says to me one time, he says: "Funk," he says, "you can put it right down, if they'd run it right, the Ku Klux is the best order what they is going. They ain't none of them," he says, "what's got the charter and the constitution and all like of that what the Ku Klux has. Now you'll hear a lot of talk," he says to me, "and I ain't saying the Ku Klux ain't made mistakes and is going to make a whole hell of a lot more of them. But when you come right down to what you call citizenship and all like of that, don't let nobody tell you the Ku Klux ain't there."

MR. DYER

Why, ain't no better order in the world than the Ku Klux — if they run it right.

MR. REDDICK

That's it. If they run it right.

MR. LEE

I swear, it makes me sick to see how they run a fine order in the ground the way they do around here.

OUR GOVERNMENT

MR. PENNELL

Well, men, I tell you. It's easy enough for us to set here and belly-ache like we're doing about how they run it. But just jump in and try to run it oncet. Just try to run it oncet.

MR. FUNK

And specially a order what's trying to pull off something big, like the Ku Klux is. It's just like this fellow says to me, the one I was just now telling you about. "Funk," he says to me, "there's one thing they can't take away from the Ku Klux. It ain't no steamboat-picnic order. No, sir. When the Ku Klux holds a picnic, they don't sell no round-trip excursion tickets. That they don't."

MR. BASSETT

And another thing: that there singing. You ask me, I say that was a pretty doggone nice way to invite a fellow to church. I hope to git invited that way oncet. I'm here to say I do.

MR. LEE

And this here dirty whelp ain't got no more appreciation than to sock it to them with a pump-gun. Six shots, men. Think of that. Them poor guys didn't have no more chance than a snowball in hell.

MR. HAGAR

Yep. Ku Klux is all right. It sure is.

THE JURY

MR. WEMPLE

You hear that, don't you, Moon?

MR. MOON

Lemme alone. I ain't heared nothing.

MR. WEMPLE

Listen at that! Listen at that! I swear, people that dumb, I don't see how they git put on a jury.

MR. LEE

Why hell, Wemple, that's *why* they git put on a jury. Them lawyers figures the less sense they got, the more lies they believe.

MR. WEMPLE

Now listen at me, Moon. 'Cause if you don't git this straight, you're libel to git Ku Kluxed before you ever git outen this room. Now first off, *effen* you git it straight, we ain't going to tell the judge what you done. Then maybe you won't have to go to jail.

MR. MOON

Oh thank you. Thank you, Mr. Wemple.

MR. WEMPLE

But that ain't all of it. When you go out of here, if you got to do any talking about what you heared in

OUR GOVERNMENT

here, we want you to tell what you heared and not no dam lies like some of them does.

MR. MOON

I won't say ary word, Mr. Wemple. I hope my die I won't.

MR. WEMPLE

Well, you might. Now you heared these gentlemen say, didn't you, that the Ku Klux is a fine order, one of the finest orders in the United States?

MR. MOON

I sure did, Mr. Wemple. Ku Klux is a fine order. Yes, Mr. Wemple, I heared them say that. All of them.

MR. WEMPLE

Now —

MR. HAGAR

Wait a minute, Wemple. . . . You got that all straight, Moon?

MR. MOON

Yep. Ku Klux is a fine order.

MR. HAGAR

Then, Wemple, if he done learned that, why look like to me like he ain't going to learn no more. Not to-day. Just better let him hang on to that and call it a day.

THE JURY

MR. WEMPLE

I expect you're right at that. Now, Moon, just to show you what a fine order we think the Ku Klux is, we're all going to chip in a dollar so you can git took in. Ain't we, men?

ALL

We sure are.

[*There is a brisk digging into pockets. MR. WEMPLE collects the money and hands it over to MR. MOON.*]

MR. WEMPLE

There you are, Moon. Ten dollars for to git took in the Ku Klux and a dollar to git yourself a pint of corn.

MR. MOON

Thank you, Mr. Wemple. Thank you, everybody. Thank you. Thank you.

MR. GAIL

Well, I reckon that's all there is to it. Look to me like we're done.

MR. PETRY

This ain't no first-degree, men. This here is man-slaughter. Fact of the matter, it might be self-defense, 'cepting I always say when a man git killt, why the one that done it had ought to be found guilty of something. There's too many people getting killt lately.

OUR GOVERNMENT

MR. WEMPLE

Well, Mr. Petry, that's all right with me. If it's all right with the rest of them. . . .

[There is a moment of mumbling and nodding, which apparently betokens assent.]

MR. GAIL

Then it's manslaughter.

[He pokes his head out of the door, gives a signal to a bailiff, and in a moment they are filing back to the courtroom.]

MR. WEMPLE

And that's something else I want to bring to your attention, Moon, old man. Up to the last minute, they was all for giving him first degree. . . .

ALL

And fact of the matter, I always did say the Ku Klux was all right, if they'd run it right. . . . Why sure, Ku Klux is a fine order. . . . You bet. . . . Citizenship. . . . Patriotism. . . . All like of that. . . .

CHAPTER VIII
COUNTY GOVERNMENT

THE COMMISSIONERS

CHAPTER VIII COUNTY GOVERNMENT

THE COMMISSIONERS

The office of the County Commissioners, Room No. 1, courthouse. It is morning. Sitting in silence around the large table in the center of the room are MR. LERCH, superintendent of the county almshouse; MR. MUKENS, janitor of the almshouse; and MR. YOST, an inmate of the almshouse. Presently MR. WADE, chairman of the Board of County Commissioners, enters through a door marked "Private."

MR. WADE

I reckon you gentlemen know what I called this little meeting for. You all seen them pieces in the papers where people are getting burned up down to the almshouse, and I got to lay the matter before the commissioners, account of them people down in the lower end of the county raising so much hell about it. So I thought the thing to do was for us to kind of get together and listen to this man here that done all the talking and see what he's got to say for hisself.

MR. LERCH

All I got to say, Mr. Wade, is this here stuff in the papers is a pack of lies from start to finish and that's

OUR GOVERNMENT

all there is to it. What gets me is this here man here, and the county's been feeding him three year now, and he goes and tells them paper men a pack of lies like this here.

MR. MUKENS

Four year.

MR. LERCH

Four year, and that's all the gratitude he's got!

MR. YOST

I hope Christ may kill me if I knowed they was papermen. Then I never told them all that stuff they put in. They made up a whole lot theirself.

MR. WADE

I don't want you to think it's what you call a reflection on you, Mr. Lerch, because I know how fine you been running things out at the almshouse and all like of that. But it's them people down in the lower end of the county. You know how they are.

MR. LERCH

Don't tell me nothing about them people down in the lower end of the county, Mr. Wade. I know 'em.

MR. MUKENS

Half of 'em's already in the almshouse and half of 'em got relations that's in.

THE COMMISSIONERS

MR. WADE

Of course now, I believe in Christian burial.

MR. LERCH

Mr. Wade, every decent man believes in a Christian burial. I don't see how them paper men can look theirself in the face to print all that stuff, just on this man's say-so.

MR. YOST

I hope Christ may kill me if I told 'em all that stuff they put in. They done made a whole lot of it up.

MR. WADE

And the county feeding you four year! It's just like Mr. Lerch says, you had ought to be ashamed of yourself.

MR. LERCH

And there ain't nobody down there been treated no better than he is. Same as if he was in his own house, only better.

MR. YOST

I never knowed they was paper men. They come up to me and made out like they was just looking around.

MR. WADE

Well, what did you tell 'em?

MR. YOST

I didn't tell 'em nothing scarcely, excepting what I

OUR GOVERNMENT

hear tell, one thing another. Nothing excepting what a whole lot of them was talking around.

MR. MUKENS

What about that there jawbone?

MR. WADE

Yes, how about that there jawbone? How did they put it in about that there jawbone if you didn't show them no jawbone?

MR. LERCH

Mr. Wade, you hit it right on the head. That there is just what I want to know. How did they put it in about that there jawbone if he didn't show them no jawbone?

MR. YOST

I ain't saying I didn't tell them nothing about no jawbone. What I say is they done made up a whole lot of lies and put it in.

MR. LERCH

You ain't no more seen a jawbone down there than you seen a whale. How come you to tell them men any such lie as that?

MR. YOST

I hope Christ may kill me if I didn't find a jawbone down here. I got that jawbone, right here in my coat pocket.

THE COMMISSIONERS

[He fumbles in his pocket and produces what is unquestionably a human mandible, the teeth still sticking in it.]

MR. LERCH

That there just goes to show what kind of a man he is, Mr. Wade. He done showed them paper men that jawbone, just like they said he done.

MR. MUKENS

A fellow could of told he was lying, all along.

MR. WADE

Where did you get that jawbone?

MR. YOST

Found it in the ashes when I was hauling 'em away from the furnace. I pulled it right out of the bucket. Thought it was a clinker, first off, and pulled it right out of the bucket.

MR. LERCH

Who told you to pick the clinkers out of the bucket? You was to haul the ashes away from the furnace, and not pay no attention to them clinkers.

MR. MUKENS

And the county has been feeding him four year! Seems like the court had ought to take back the commitment of a fellow like that.

OUR GOVERNMENT

MR. YOST

Them men never said they was paper men. They just made out like they was looking around, one thing another, and then all them pieces come out in the paper.

MR. WADE

How do you know that there is a jawbone?

MR. YOST

Them men said it was a jawbone. It looks like a jawbone.

MR. MUKENS

That there might be a dog's jawbone.

MR. WADE

What else did you tell them paper men?

MR. YOST

I didn't tell them nothing. I didn't tell them any other thing. They done made up all the rest of them things they put in.

MR. WADE

How about this here piece about you seeing Mr. Lerch and Mr. Mukens throwing a stiff in the furnace?

MR. LERCH

Mr. Wade, you hit it. That there is just what I want to know. I just been waiting for you to ask him.

THE COMMISSIONERS

MR. MUKENS

Me too. I just been waiting.

MR. YOST

I don't remember saying nothing about that. I don't remember good what I did tell them, account of them not saying they was paper men, one thing another. We just kind of talked along, like of that.

MR. WADE

Then that there was another lie, wasn't it? You didn't see no stiff throwed on the furnace no more than I did, did you?

MR. YOST

I hope Christ may kill me if I didn't see Mr. Lerch and Mr. Mukens throw a stiff right in the furnace.

MR. WADE

Then you *did* tell the paper men all this here stuff they put in, didn't you?

MR. YOST

I don't just recollect. But they done made a whole lot of it up.

MR. LERCH

How do you know it was a stiff?

MR. YOST

I knowed it was a stiff by the smell. I smell it soon as

OUR GOVERNMENT

the fire hit it. Didn't smell like no other meat. Had a kind of funny smell to it.

MR. MUKENS

I never heard the beat of that.

MR. LERCH

That there just goes to show how much truth there is in all this stuff you read in the papers.

MR. WADE

How come you to see all this here?

MR. YOST

I hid out on them. I heard a lot of talk, one thing another, and then one day I heard a fellow died in there, and I hid out on them, right down in the cellar.

MR. WADE

And the county has been feeding you four year!

MR. YOST

I hope Christ may kill me if I didn't see them throw a stiff right in the furnace. I hid out on them, and first thing you know, I hear the door upstairs open easy like, and here come Mr. Lerch and Mr. Mukens, carrying a stiff on a stretcher, one to his head and one to his feet. Then, when they got to the furnace, Mr. Mukens

THE COMMISSIONERS

threwed the door open, he did, and then him and Mr. Lerch shoved him in on the fire.

MR. WADE

And then you hollered for the paper men?

MR. YOST

I didn't holler for no paper men, no, sir! I run, I did, after Mr. Lerch and Mr. Mukens went away. And I never knowed they was paper men. They made out like they was just looking around.

MR. WADE

What else did you tell the paper men?

MR. YOST

I never told them nothing else. That there is all I told them, only they made up a whole lot theirsself and put it in.

MR. WADE

So that there is all you seen, or think you seen?

MR. YOST

That there is all I seen, but I heared a plenty of talk going around.

MR. WADE

We don't want to know what you heared. We want to know what you seen.

OUR GOVERNMENT

MR. YOST

That there is all I seen, but I heared a plenty.

MR. LERCH

Don't that beat all, Mr. Wade? Here this fellow finds a jawbone somewheres around, maybe he digs it up out of the graveyard, and thinks he seen a stiff throwed in the furnace, and that's all there is to this talk and stuff you see in the newspapers.

MR. MUKENS

And come to find out he don't know if it was a stiff or not.

MR. WADE

Seems to me them fellows would get tired of printing all the lies they print. They could of come to me or you and none of this stuff would of come out. Now we got the people down in the lower end of the county all stirred up and the commissioners is got to act on it. You know how them people in the lower end of the county is.

MR. LERCH

Don't tell *me*! I know them.

MR. MUKENS

My wife's people lives down there, and I never seen the beat. Ain't nothing ever suits them.

THE COMMISSIONERS

MR. WADE

If them fellows would only print the truth I wouldn't mind. It's them lies that gets me.

MR. LERCH

Of course now, I ain't saying we ain't burned some of them people up — cremating them, I call it, regular cremation. But all this stuff about not having no Christian praying for them, why there ain't nothing to that. I'm for Christian praying same as anybody else. I been a church member for twenty-five year now, and from what them fellows has put in the paper you would think I was brother-in-law to the devil.

MR. MUKENS

And me his stepchild.

MR. LERCH

Why, Mr. Wade, the grand jury would be after me in a minute if I tried to bury all them people. I'm under a bond, I am.

MR. WADE

Them is the things people never understand.

MR. LERCH [*to Mr. Yost*]

How come you to tell all them lies on me, when you knowed them people gets put away as good as anybody could ask for?

OUR GOVERNMENT

MR. YOST

I never knowed they was paper men. If I had of knowed they was paper men, I wouldn't never told them nothing.

MR. LERCH

Why, Mr. Wade, me and Mr. Mukens figured it up one night, and you ain't got a idea what it would cost to bury all them people.

MR. WADE

I ain't got no doubt of it.

MR. MUKENS

Something tremenjous. Nobody wouldn't never believe it.

MR. LERCH

First off, Mr. Wade, the county would have to buy more land. That graveyard is all filled up down there. County would have to buy another graveyard. Then we would have to hire two extra men regular, just digging graves. It takes two men a whole morning to dig a grave, and a whole day in wintertime, when the ground is froze.

MR. WADE

Them is the things that runs into money.

MR. LERCH

Then you got to have a box. And I tell you, it ain't like it used to be, when you could knock a dry-goods

THE COMMISSIONERS

box apart and nail it together again and have as good a box as anybody could want.

MR. MUKENS

Them fellows is asking money for boxes, too. A dollar apiece for them, some of them gets.

MR. LERCH

What with the high price of lumber and carpenters' wages, I tell you a box costs money.

MR. WADE

Lumber and wages is out of sight. I just finished building a storm door on my porch, not no fancy storm door, just a regular storm door, and it cost me seventy-five dollars time I was done with it.

MR. LERCH

It's a shame what them fellows asks for a day's work. There ain't none of them will touch a job for less than ten dollars a day.

MR. WADE

And what's more, they get it.

MR. MUKENS

They ask railroad fare to come down our way.

MR. LERCH

Time you figure it all up, like me and Mr. Mukens

OUR GOVERNMENT

done one night, I expect it would cost twenty-five dollars a head to bury them people.

MR. WADE

I don't doubt it.

MR. MUKENS

Every cent of it.

MR. LERCH

Then people don't stop to think how many of them people dies on us down there. We had a hundred and sixty-two die last year, and that's a average of more than three a week. Wintertime is the worst, account of so many of them bums getting committed.

MR. WADE

They ought to send them bums to the county jail.

MR. MUKENS

Jail is the place for them. I always did say so.

MR. LERCH

Time you figure it all up, Mr. Wade, it would cost the county ten thousand dollars a year just to bury them people.

MR. MUKENS

And them nothing but paupers!

THE COMMISSIONERS

MR. LERCH

I tell you, Mr. Wade, I would be afraid for the grand jury to come down there if I had to tell them I was spending ten thousand dollars of the county's money every year just to bury them people.

MR. WADE

Seems to me like them people's relations ought to bury some of them.

MR. YOST

Them people's relations that got burned up ain't never heard tell of them after they died. Don't even know they're dead.

MR. LERCH

Who asked you to get into it? Mr. Wade is the chairman of the County Commissioners, and I would think a fellow that was in the county almshouse would have enough respect for him to shut up until somebody asked him to speak up.

MR. YOST

I didn't mean nothing, only I hear tell a lot of them people's relations was looking for them.

MR. WADE

You hear tell a plenty.

OUR GOVERNMENT

MR. LERCH

Well, I tell you how it is, Mr. Wade. It would seem like them people's relations had ought to bury some of them, but I found out it don't hardly pay to look them up. Half of them ain't got money enough to have a funeral anyhow, and the other half you can't find them.

MR. WADE

I reckon that's right.

MR. LERCH

Then it makes it bad in summer if you try to keep them people while you're looking up their relations. You got to ice them, and that costs money.

MR. MUKENS

They won't keep long in summer.

MR. WADE

The whole trouble is them people down in the lower end of the county. Seems like them people won't ever listen to reason.

MR. LERCH

Yes, it's them people down in the lower end of the county that makes it bad. They got a couple of preachers down there that want to be called in all the time, and then when they don't get no business they put up a holler.

THE COMMISSIONERS

MR. YOST

Then another thing I hear a lot of talk about, how they don't never have no preacher called in. People dying all the time and they don't never have no preacher.

MR. LERCH

Don't that beat all, Mr. Wade? Say, how can you say them things to Mr. Wade, when you know Mr. Mukens is a preacher and you been hearing him preach every Sunday since you been down there?

MR. YOST

Them people want a regular preacher.

MR. LERCH

And you know Mr. Mukens is a regular preacher, Baptist I think it is, a regular preacher with a license. Don't you know that?

MR. YOST

I never hear tell of it before.

MR. WADE

Are you a reverend, Mr. Mukens? I declare, I never knowed that.

MR. MUKENS

Not Baptist. Disciples of Christ.

OUR GOVERNMENT

MR. LERCH

Now that there just goes to show, Mr. Wade, how much of a kick these preachers is really got.

MR. WADE

Of course, now, I'm for Christian burial.

MR. LERCH

Why, certainly, Mr. Wade, everybody is for Christian burial. What I mean is, everybody is for putting them away Christian. Me, I don't see no difference between burying them and cremating them, just so they get put away Christian. When I go, it don't make no difference to me what they do with me, just so they say a Christian prayer over me, like of that.

MR. WADE

Me neither.

MR. MUKENS

Me neither.

MR. LERCH [*to Mr. Yost*]

When *you* go, which it wouldn't hurt the county none if you went pretty quick, what difference does it make to you whether you get buried or what you call cremated?

MR. YOST

I hear a lot of them say they they don't want to get burnt up.

THE COMMISSIONERS

MR. LERCH

Why? Just tell me that once.

MR. YOST

Some of them is Seven Day Adventists.

MR. WADE

How many of them is Seven Day Adventists?

MR. YOST

There's a whole lot of them Seven Day Adventists.
I'm a Seven Day Adventist.

MR. WADE [*to Mr. Lerch*]

Is that right?

MR. LERCH

Well, it's according as according. Sometimes more
of them gets committed than other times.

MR. WADE

That kind of makes it bad.

MR. LERCH

Yes, that's a fact, Mr. Wade, I've kind of thought of
that myself, that makes it bad. But I say, just because
them people thinks they're going to step out of the
grave in a couple of years, that ain't hardly no reason
for the county to spend ten thousand dollars a year

OUR GOVERNMENT

burying 'em. Maybe they're going to step out of the grave and maybe they ain't.

MR. MUKENS

That there is something nobody can tell.

MR. YOST

And then I hear a lot of talk going around, them people ain't going to have no white gown.

MR. LERCH

There ain't nothing to that, Mr. Wade. All them people gets a white gown. Ain't no fancy gown, but we don't put them away without no clothes on.

MR. YOST

But the gown its gets burned up in that there furnace just like this here jawbone.

MR. LERCH

That jawbone didn't get burned up. You got it in your hand.

MR. YOST

I ain't got the rest of that stiff in my hand. That I ain't.

MR. WADE

Is them preachers Seven Day Adventists?

THE COMMISSIONERS

MR. LERCH

I believe they are, Mr. Wade.

MR. YOST

Them preachers is raising hell, too.

MR. LERCH

You been talking to them preachers, too, have you? First you talk to the paper men, then you talk to the preachers.

MR. YOST

I never knowed they was paper men.

MR. WADE

Them Seven Day Adventists makes it bad. Course, it don't make no difference to me. I say if they get put away Christian, that's all anybody could ask.

MR. LERCH

That's all anybody could ask, Mr. Wade. And them people gets put away as Christian as I ever hope to get put away. Mr. Mukens prays over every one, and Mr. Mukens can put up as good a prayer as the next one, if you ask me. Even this man can tell you Mr. Mukens can put up a good prayer.

MR. YOST

He prays pretty good, but he ain't no regular preacher. Not what them people wants for a regular preacher. I hear a lot of talk going on about it.

OUR GOVERNMENT

MR. WADE

What I'm figuring on is what to tell the County Commissioners. Them papers has stirred up such a fuss we got to take action on it.

MR. LERCH

Well, I tell you how it is, Mr. Wade, it don't make no difference to me, one way or the other. Fact of the matter is, it'll save me and Mr. Mukens a whole lot of work. It ain't no light job, carrying them stiffs downstairs like we have to do. But what I say is, if the commissioners think them Seven Day Adventists had ought to be buried regular, why, just let the commissioners give me the money and I'll bury them regular and put them other people away the way we been doing.

MR. MUKENS

That seems to be perfectly fair and reasonable.

MR. WADE

That there would certainly satisfy them people down in the lower end of the county. Them people is all Seven Day Adventists. What I'm thinking about is the other sections of the county. Maybe we'll get 'em all stirred up.

MR. LERCH

I don't think you would, Mr. Wade. When you come to these other people that gets committed, why, no-

THE COMMISSIONERS

body don't know what their religion is. They don't know theirself.

MR. WADE

Well, I guess we better do it that way then. I'll call the commissioners in special meeting, and then we can stop all this fuss in the papers. Will you take this man back with you?

MR. LERCH

That I will, Mr. Wade. And thank you for the way you treated me in this here matter. I sure do appreciate it. Because what I say, when a man has done his duty like I have ever since I been down there, why, he kind of hates to see somebody come out and say he ain't no account and ought to be run out, like of that. I sure do appreciate the way you done, Mr. Wade.

MR. MUKENS

Mr. Wade, I just want to say that you treated me and Mr. Lerch white about this, and if there's ever a time I can return the favor, why just let me know.

MR. YOST

Thank you, sir, Mr. Wade, thank you, sir. And I never knowed them was paper men, Mr. Wade, I hope Christ may kill me if I did.

MR. WADE

Good day, gentlemen.

CHAPTER IX
COUNTY GOVERNMENT (Continued)
THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

CHAPTER IX COUNTY GOVERNMENT (*Continued*)

THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

The office of THE PRINCIPAL, in the first room on the left as you enter the front door of the high school. It is about ten o'clock in the morning. THE PRINCIPAL is at his desk, when a parent enters, with his child. THE PRINCIPAL receives them both with a somewhat mechanical affability, in the manner of a dentist going through the polite amenities before examining a tooth.

THE PRINCIPAL

Well, well, well. Come in, sir. Sit down. Your boy? Well, well, well. We have a good many here, but I'm pretty sure I know his face. Well now. Something on your mind? Nothing serious, I hope, ha ha ha. As the fellow says, it's never anything serious until your own boy gets mixed up in it, ha ha ha. Well now.

THE PARENT

I come in to find out what this boy was sent home for.

THE PRINCIPAL

Sent home? When?

OUR GOVERNMENT

THE PARENT

Yesterday.

THE PRINCIPAL

Well now. That ought not to be hard to straighten out. The name, if you don't mind? You see, we have a great many here —

THE PARENT

Fletcher's my name. My boy's name is Herbert.

THE PRINCIPAL

Who is your teacher, Herbert?

THE CHILD

Miss Prochnik, sir.

THE PRINCIPAL

Yes, I thought you were in Miss Prochnik's room. Well now, let's see. I think Miss Prochnik sent me a memorandum — yes, here it is. Why . . .

THE PARENT

Hunh?

THE PRINCIPAL

H'm.

THE CHILD

Sssfffl.

THE PARENT

Stop that sniffing.

THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

THE PRINCIPAL

Herbert, did Miss Prochnik give you a letter? She says here: "Parent advised by note."

THE CHILD

I lost it.

THE PARENT

You lost it, hunh? You lost it? Just like the nigger lost the watch. You throwed it away, that's what you done, so me and your ma wouldn't know —

THE PRINCIPAL

Now, wait a minute, wait a minute. As the fellow says, we better not be in any hurry, ha ha ha. Maybe we make better time if we make haste slowly. Now, Herbert, my boy, what happened? Miss Prochnik gave you a note, you say. Now what did you do with it?

THE CHILD

She give me a note, ssffll, ssffll, and I put it in my pocket, ssffll, ssffll, ssffll, and when I got home it wasn't there, ssffll, ssffll, ssffll, and —

THE PARENT

Stop that sniffing!

THE CHILD

Ssffll.

THE PRINCIPAL

You mean you lost it out of your pocket?

OUR GOVERNMENT

THE CHILD

Yes, sir. Ssffll.

THE PRINCIPAL

Well, that sometimes happens, ha ha ha.

THE PARENT

Yeah, that sometimes happens, but it don't happen twice when I'm around, see? You hear that, you . . . Wipe off that nose and quit that sniffing, I tell you!

THE CHILD

Ssffll.

THE PRINCIPAL

Of course, I may say —

THE PARENT

You ain't saying nothing till I get done. What was he sent home for? What was in that note?

THE PRINCIPAL

I may say that notes sent by the teacher would be more likely to arrive safely if there were a little less bellicosity on the part of the parent, and a little more understanding. Do I make myself clear?

THE PARENT

The hell you say.

THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

THE PRINCIPAL

Yes.

THE PARENT

Well—all right. Well—maybe you're right. Well—that's that.

THE PRINCIPAL

All right, then. Now we understand each other on that point, we'll proceed, ha ha ha. Let's see, now. What else does Miss Prochnik say. "Sent home for refusing to lead salute to flag."

THE PARENT

What!

THE CHILD

Sssfffl-ssfffl-ssfffl!

THE PRINCIPAL

That's what she's written here. . . .

THE PARENT

Refusing to lead the salute to the flag! Why, you miserable little . . . Quit that sniffing and snoofing and bellering and tell me what you mean by that!

THE PRINCIPAL

Quit that bellering yourself, my dear man, or I'll have to ask you to leave my office.

OUR GOVERNMENT

THE PARENT

What?

THE PRINCIPAL

I think you heard me.

THE PARENT

I'll leave your office when I get good and goddam ready to go, you hear that?

THE PRINCIPAL

You'll leave my office on a stretcher if I have to throw you out, ha ha ha. As the fellow says, it's not always the loudest voices that go with the hardest fists.

THE PARENT

You trying to tell me you're getting ready to take a poke at me?

THE PRINCIPAL

Well — yes.

THE PARENT

Why dam you, you can't lick one side of me.

THE PRINCIPAL

Well, perhaps not. Of course I don't know. As the fellow says, that's one of those things you never can tell about till you've tried it, and even then maybe you're wrong, ha ha ha. Still, I was conference champion at boxing while I was in college. Middleweight. So I might make a try.

THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

THE PARENT

You was?

THE PRINCIPAL

It says so on the cup, anyway. There it is, up on the bookcase. Pretty cup, isn't it?

THE PARENT

I guess that makes it different.

THE PRINCIPAL

Well, well, well. Let's see if we can get this little matter ironed out. What was the trouble with the salute to the flag, Herbert?

THE CHILD

Nothing, ssfffl, ssfffl, ssfffl.

THE PARENT

Quit that—

THE PRINCIPAL

Now!

THE PARENT

Yes, sir.

THE PRINCIPAL

Why didn't you lead the salute, Herbert, like all the other boys when it came their turn?

THE CHILD

It was them silly ssfffl ssfffl ssfffl gestures ssfffl ssfffl ssfffl that we had ssfffl ssfffl ssfffl to make.

OUR GOVERNMENT

THE PARENT

The what?

THE PRINCIPAL

The gestures. This way. First the right hand out, "I pledge allegiance to my flag," then the hand on the heart — you know.

THE PARENT

Oh yeah.

THE PRINCIPAL

Now, Herbert —

THE PARENT

Dogged if we ain't had that when I went to school. I remember now. First your hand went out, then over your heart — ain't that right?

THE PRINCIPAL

Quite right.

THE PARENT

Then the whole school had to stand facing the flag — ain't that right?

THE PRINCIPAL

Quite right.

THE PARENT

Gee, that there was great when the whole bunch begun doing that, all together. . . .

THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

THE CHILD

Ssfffl.

THE PARENT

Yeah, ssfffl! So you're the one that thinks you're too dam good to do that, are you? You're the one that can't git out there and lead the salute to your country's flag —

THE CHILD

Ssfffl-ssfffl-ssfffl!

THE PARENT

Quit that sniffing or I'll take your breeches down and stripe a flag on your back side that'll stay there the rest of your life! You hear me!

THE PRINCIPAL

Now!

THE PARENT

I don't care if you was the middleweight champeen of Rooshia! That kid has got to learn what we got a flag for in this country! That flag was good enough for me and it was good enough for you. Why ain't it good enough for him? Why —

THE PRINCIPAL

Now, Mr. Fletcher — ah, ha ha ha.

THE PARENT

All right, mister. But, gee, this does make me feel sick. His country's flag! Think of that.

OUR GOVERNMENT

THE PRINCIPAL

Now, Herbert, did anybody ever explain to you that each of those gestures mean something? Did anybody ever explain to you they mean something that's pretty important?

THE CHILD

No, sir, ssfffl ssfffl.

THE PRINCIPAL

Did you ever see a soldier salute the flag?

THE CHILD

No, sir, ssfffl.

THE PRINCIPAL

Well, he does, every morning when the flag goes up and every evening when it comes down. You wouldn't think there was anything silly-looking about a soldier, would you?

THE CHILD

No, sir.

THE PRINCIPAL

Well, you go back to Miss Prochnik now, and tell her I said she's to explain to you what those gestures mean. And then I want you to come to me after school and tell me if you still think they're silly.

THE CHILD

Yes, sir.

THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

THE PARENT

Is that the best you can say after the nice way this gentleman has treated you? After the way you done insulted your flag? Your country's flag?

THE CHILD [*as he goes*]

Yes, sir. Thank you, sir. Thank . . .

THE PARENT

Mister, I ain't had nothing break me up like this in God know how long. Think of that. His country's flag!

THE PRINCIPAL

Oh well, boys will be boys, you know, ha ha ha. And now, if you don't mind. . . .

THE PARENT

Sure, I'm going. Well, mister, you been pretty nice about this, and it ain't every day a fellow meets a middle-weight champion, and all like of that. There's my card, if you ever need anything. The Scotch and the rye ain't so hot, but the gin, I guarantee every bottle. Well, so long. . . .

CHAPTER X
COUNTY GOVERNMENT (Continued)
THE SHERIFF

CHAPTER X COUNTY GOVERNMENT (Continued)

THE SHERIFF

The sheriff's office in the county jail, about eight o'clock in the evening. Sitting in front of the stove, saying little, are MR. LUTZ, a deputy sheriff, and MR. GILL, a constable. MR. SOLLERS, the sheriff, comes in and removes his coat and hat in portentous silence, then sits down beside them.

MR. SOLLERS

I mean I'll be glad when we get this nigger hung. This here has got my goat so bad I hate to come around my own jail.

MR. LUTZ

You ain't the only one.

MR. GILL

And two weeks to go yet. Holy smoke, but that there is a long time.

MR. SOLLERS

What I say, why ain't they let us hang them two niggers together, seeing as they both carved up the same Bohunk?

OUR GOVERNMENT

MR. GILL

What I say, why ain't they let them two niggers hang theirself, like they tried to do when they was first caught?

MR. LUTZ

And save us the trouble.

MR. SOLLERS

If they would of done that, why, then them lawyers couldn't of made no spiel. Anything new today?

MR. LUTZ

Plenty.

MR. SOLLERS

Yeah?

MR. LUTZ

Tell him, Gill.

MR. SOLLERS

Say, what's coming off around here? You two look like somebody stoled your pants.

MR. LUTZ

The hell you say!

MR. GILL

Hunh.

MR. LUTZ

You go on and tell him, and when you get done see if maybe he don't look like he ain't never had no pants.

THE SHERIFF

MR. GILL

And maybe glad of it.

MR. SOLLERS

Well, for Pete's sake, spit it out.

MR. GILL

It's the other one.

MR. SOLLERS

Which other one?

MR. GILL

The one that was hung last month.

MR. SOLLERS

What about him?

MR. GILL

He's back!

MR. SOLLERS

What! . . . Men, don't tell me that!

MR. LUTZ

Yep, he's back!

MR. SOLLERS

God help me! . . . I always said them two niggers hadn't ought to be hung. That murder wasn't never proved up on them right. Ain't I always said that?

OUR GOVERNMENT

MR. LUTZ

You done said so much I don't just recollect all the fine points. Anyway, that there one is back.

MR. SOLLERS

How the hell do you know he's back?

MR. GILL

We seen him. Anyway, Lutz seen him and I heard him.

MR. SOLLERS

Where was it you seen him?

MR. GILL

Right out there in the main corridor, where we had the scaffold.

MR. SOLLERS

When?

MR. GILL

Last night.

MR. LUTZ

Seven minutes after twelve.

MR. SOLLERS

Seven minutes after twelve? . . . Why men, that was when we — that was right when we hung him!

MR. GILL

Right to the minute.

THE SHERIFF

MR. LUTZ

No it wasn't.

MR. SOLLERS

I'm a-telling you, it was right when we hung him. I took note of the time, for to put it in my report, and it was seven minutes after twelve.

MR. LUTZ

It wasn't when *we* hung him, no such. It was when *you* hung him. Just lay offen this here *we* stuff.

MR. SOLLER

We all done it together, according to law.

MR. LUTZ

We did like hell. You done it yourself, according to law.

MR. GILL

That's right, Sheriff. Anyway that's how me and Lutz got it figgered out.

MR. SOLLERS

So you tooken the whole day figgering, and now you got it all figgered out. You two is so smart I wonder you ain't cut yourself. Anyhow, what the hell difference does it make?

MR. LUTZ

It don't make no difference. No difference at all. Only

OUR GOVERNMENT

if that nigger was looking for *me*, it's funny he ain't said something to me, seeing I was standing there scared so bad I couldn't run.

MR. GILL

I swear, Sheriff, when Lutz told me what it was out there squealing, I says to myself: "Boy, you sure ought to be glad you wasn't the one that sprung the trap."

MR. SOLLERS

Quit talking about that trap! Shut up about it, I say!

MR. LUTZ

Oh no! It don't make no difference who hung him.

MR. GILL

It looks to me like that trap was pretty important.

MR. SOLLERS

Men, why the hell you act all the time like you're sore at me? You ain't never acted with me thataway before. We was all good friends.

MR. LUTZ

'Then why the hell don't you stick around the jail where you belong at, 'stead of laying around shooting pool all the time?

MR. GILL

And specially at a time like this.

THE SHERIFF

MR. SOLLERS

Men, I'll tell you the truth now, if I ever told it. This here has got my goat, just like I said. I know I ought to be here. I know how it is on you boys. But I been looking for him to come back. I could feel it he was coming back. And I just ain't got the guts to stay here. *'Cause I was the one sprung the trap!*

MR. GILL

You sure did.

MR. SOLLERS

God, I got to have liquor. I got so in the last couple of weeks I can't hardly hold my hand out in front of me 'thouten it trimmles like I had the shivering ager.

[He unlocks his desk, produces a bottle, and they drink.]

MR. GILL

I would of give something pretty for a shot of that last night.

MR. LUTZ

I would of give my last lousy nickel.

MR. SOLLERS

I meant for to give you boys the key, but I been so scared I forgot it. . . . How come you to see this here — this here nigger?

OUR GOVERNMENT

MR. LUTZ

Well, that there was one of the remarkablest things I ever seen.

MR. GILL

It sure was.

MR. LUTZ

We was setting here, me and Gill, getting ready for to lock up for the night. We ain't took no notice of the time. Fact of the matter, we was talking, one thing another, and we ain't never thought about it. And then all of a sudden this here nigger commence to whooping and hollering and carrying on — you never heard such a noise in your life.

MR. SOLLERS

I always knowed he was coming back. I could feel it in my bones.

MR. GILL

Oh no!

MR. LUTZ

No, no. Not the one we hung. The other one. The one upstairs.

MR. SOLLERS

What was eating him?

MR. LUTZ

He wanted a Bible. I left Gill setting here and I went up to his cell, and when I got there, he let on like he

THE SHERIFF

wanted a Bible. So I says: "What the hell good is a Bible going to do you? You can't read it, and it ain't no good to eat." So he says there's a place in there what a preacher learned him how to read it, effen I can find it for him, so I says: "All right," 'cause what I say, when a fellow's getting ready to be hung, you might just as well do what you can for him.

MR. SOLLERS

I been looking for him to commence hollering for a Bible or something like that. They generally get that way, about this time.

MR. LUTZ

So I starts down the steps for to fetch him the Bible. And then I thinks to myself, why, Gill, he's setting there right by it, so why not ask him to fetch it up? So I hollers to Gill.

MR. GILL

I was setting right where I'm setting now.

MR. LUTZ

I says: "Yay, Gill," and he says "Yay"; and I says: "Fetch up the Bible, will you?" and he says: "Fetch up what?" and I says: "Fetch up the Bible."

MR. GILL

I swear, I couldn't understand what he said for to save my neck.

OUR GOVERNMENT

MR. LUTZ

So I started to holler to him again. "Fetch up the Bible" was what I was fixing to say. And then, I hope my die, I dam near died, 'cause there he was.

MR. GILL

And me still hollering for to know what it was Lutz wanted.

MR. LUTZ

And me, I heared Gill every time he hollered, and I couldn't say nothing. Effen I was to of died on the spot, I couldn't of said nothing.

MR. SOLLERS

What did he do? Jump out at you like?

MR. LUTZ

He did like hell. He come right in through the back door, right in from the graveyard, where we planted him. And me knowing all the time that door was locked tighter'n a tick on a hound's back, 'cause I locked it myself, right after supper.

MR. SOLLERS

Right through the door. Right through the door.

MR. GILL

That's what gets me.

THE SHERIFF

MR. LUTZ

So I stopped in my tracks.

MR. GILL

I would of dropped dead.

MR. SOLLERS

Me too.

MR. GILL

And he come right on. He never stopped till he got to the place where we had the scaffold. Then he stopped and he commence turning around, like he was looking for something.

MR. SOLLERS

He turned around and around and around! God, I thought he never would get done with that goddam spinning.

MR. LUTZ

What? Was you there all the time?

MR. SOLLERS

I mean when we hung him. Real slow, but he ain't never stopped till them doctors went up to him.

MR. LUTZ

Gosh, I never thought of that.

MR. GILL

I swear, this here gets worse and worse every minute.

OUR GOVERNMENT

MR. LUTZ

So then—

MR. SOLLERS

Wait a minute. Let's have another drink.

[*They drink.*]

MR. GILL

Dam, that stuff is smooth, ain't it?

MR. SOLLERS

I been sopping it up every day. But seems like it don't hardly take no effect.

MR. LUTZ

So then I says to myself, if he looks at me, why I'd a hell of a sight ruther I'd die first. But he never done it. He looked right through me. I swear, I ain't never seen nothing like that in my life. He looked right at me, but he never seen me. I could tell from how he looked, he never seen me. So then I says to myself, maybe it ain't me he's looking for. Maybe he's looking for somebody else.

MR. SOLLERS

Maybe he was.

MR. GILL

I swear, if he was looking for Lutz, it sure does look like he would of said something to him.

MR. LUTZ

So then he commence to squeal.

THE SHERIFF

MR. GILL

And me, I heared that with my own ears. Sound just like a rat.

MR. LUTZ

Didn't sound so much like a rat to me. Sound more like a shoat.

MR. GILL

Well, you take a rat and a shoat, and when they get to squealing good, a fellow couldn't hardly tell them apart.

MR. LUTZ

Anyhow, he squealed like hell, I'm here to say.

MR. GILL

I never heared the beat.

MR. SOLLERS

Wait a minute. . . . Just lemme get aholt of myself a little bit. . . . Boys, I mean this here sure goes hard with me.

MR. GILL

I know how it is.

MR. SOLLERS

All right. Go ahead.

MR. LUTZ

Well, that was when Gill got in it. Tell him what you done, Gill.

OUR GOVERNMENT

MR. GILL

It's just like I was telling you. I heared Lutz hollering for the Bible, but I couldn't hear what he said. So I hollered to him a couple of times, and then he ain't said nothing and I thought to myself, that's funny, that Lutz would holler like that and then shut up. So I was kind of figgering on it like, when all of a sudden I heared this here squealing. Lutz here, he says it sound like a shoat, but it sound more like a rat to me, so I started out after him. I picked up a chunk on the way out for to heave at him, and then I hit for the main corridor, right on the run.

MR. LUTZ

And tell him what you seen.

MR. GILL

What I seen was Lutz, but I swear to God I never seen him looking like that before. Lutz, he was green, same as that paint I put on my house last year. I never seen such a looking sight in my life. So I says: "What's the matter, boy?" And then he told me what it was that was squealing.

MR. SOLLERS

Did he beat it when he heared Gill coming? I mean, this here nigger?

MR. LUTZ

Sure, he beat it, but he wasn't in no hurry about it. He kind of turned around when he heared Gill coming,

THE SHERIFF

and he looked, and then he went out the back door, right where he come from. But slow, kind of sliding along, taking his time.

MR. SOLLERS

And that back door, was it still locked?

MR. LUTZ

Tight. Me and Gill both tried it.

MR. GILL

And the key still in the lock.

MR. SOLLERS

I hear tell, when they come back, they can go through a locked door.

MR. GILL

And you ain't told him about his neck, Lutz.

MR. LUTZ

That's right. He kind of held his head on the side, like he had a crick in his neck.

MR. GILL

And the time. You forgot to tell him about that, too.

MR. LUTZ

After me and Gill got back in here, we seen the clock,

OUR GOVERNMENT

and it was nine minutes after twelve. And we figgered about a couple of minutes had gone by.

MR. SOLLERS

Lutz, are you sure it was the same nigger? I mean, there couldn't be no mistake about it?

MR. LUTZ

I brung that nigger his grub for three months and shoved it at him right through the bars, and if I don't know him when I see him, I don't know God made little apples. And if you want to make sure, why you better set up and wait for him tonight.

MR. SOLLERS

I wouldn't set up for him effen they was to give me the jail.

MR. GILL

So that there is how come we look like somebody stole our pants.

MR. SOLLERS

Men, what are we going to do?

MR. LUTZ

That there is something to make a fellow set down and think.

MR. GILL

It looks to me like locking that door don't do a dam bit of good.

THE SHERIFF

MR. SOLLERS

What I mean, what are we going to do about this other one?

MR. LUTZ

Me and Gill, we ain't got nothing to do with that. That there is up to you. You're the sheriff.

MR. SOLLERS

I ain't going to do it! You hear what I'm telling you, I ain't going to hang him! That there murder wasn't never proved up on him right. It wasn't proved up on him and it wasn't proved up on the other one, neither.

MR. LUTZ

It sure does look like there was something wrong.

MR. GILL

How you going to get out of it, Sheriff? The court says they got to be hung.

MR. SOLLERS

I don't know. But I ain't going to hang him, not effen I got to resign my office to get out of it. This here has got my goat.

MR. LUTZ

So you're going to resign your office, hey? Then *I* got to hang him. Well, you are like hell. You done raised

OUR GOVERNMENT

enough hell to get your office. Now you stay in it till this nigger's hung or you won't never get no other office. Not if I got anything to do with how the Democratic party is run in this county.

MR. SOLLERS

Don't talk that way, Lutz. I wasn't figgering on you having to hang him. I forgot that. I wasn't figgering on nothing, 'cepping I'm scared gutless.

MR. LUTZ

Well, see you lay off this figgering stuff. First thing you know, you'll be so smart I'm afeared you'll cut yourself.

MR. GILL

What I say, it don't make so much difference about them niggers getting hung. 'Cause if they ain't carved up that there Bohunk, why maybe they done something else what they ought to be hung for. Or if they ain't already done it, why, maybe they'll do it in a couple years' time, like of that. What I say, they hadn't ought to be hung in this here jail.

MR. SOLLERS

No, sir. I ain't figgering on nothing.

MR. LUTZ

Dam near wore out everybody's buttonhole in the county, and then talking about resigning!

THE SHERIFF

MR. SOLLERS

What's that, Gill?

MR. GILL

I say they ought to be hung somewheres else.

MR. SOLLERS

I just been thinking maybe we could build that scaffold outside in the jail-yard. Maybe they won't come back if you hang them outdoors.

MR. LUTZ

How about them graveyards? They come back there, all right.

MR. SOLLERS

I never thought about that.

MR. LUTZ

Yeah, that there idea is great. Then we'll have them all over the place, 'stead of only out in the main corridor.

MR. GILL

This here is one time it wouldn't hurt none if they was to get up a gang and take this nigger out and lynch him. Then it wouldn't be us that hung him.

MR. SOLLERS

Ain't no gang going to take him out. 'Cause a whole lot of people, they don't think he done it.

OUR GOVERNMENT

MR. LUTZ

And think he done a fine thing for the county, killing a Bohunk, even if he done it.

MR. GILL

Or anyway, if a gang *said* they was going to do it, so we could hustle him over to the State penitentiary.

MR. LUTZ

Say.

MR. SOLLERS

What?

MR. LUTZ

Dam if I don't think Gill thought of something, for oncet in his life.

MR. SOLLERS

What's that?

MR. LUTZ

What's the matter with us saying we heared some talk going around, one thing another, and then hustle him over to the penitentiary anyhow?

MR. SOLLERS

Nobody wouldn't never believe it.

MR. LUTZ

The hell they wouldn't. Nobody outside of this county knows anything about it nohow, and we can say that

THE SHERIFF

maybe none of the decent people wouldn't take him out, but we got a no-account element around here what wouldn't stop at taking him out anyhow, whether he done it or not. And God knows that ain't no lie.

MR. GILL

Well, I sure am glad to see you boys is woke up at last.

MR. LUTZ

Well, I sure am glad you woke up in time to see we woke up.

MR. SOLLERS

I swear, I don't hardly see how anybody could put up a squawk on that. And how the hell do we know that they ain't fixing to take him out? Dam, I mean some of them young fellows they got working around on these farms is mean.

MR. GILL

Some of them would take him out quick as they'd look at him.

MR. SOLLERS

It sure is a shame the way they treat them niggers. Them poor coons, it don't seem like there's hardly anything they can do that somebody don't want to lynch them for it.

MR. GILL

I never held with it. I always did say it was wrong.

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MR. SOLLERS

I never taken a nigger over to the penitentiary. How do they do it? I mean, does the county sheriff pull the trap, like it was being done in his own jail?

MR. LUTZ

Looks like to me, effen the county sheriff wasn't scared so bad he couldn't think, he would say he didn't have no jurisdiction outside his own county.

MR. SOLLERS

That's right. And then another thing, I can say I hadn't ought to be there at all. I can say I had ought to be home, for to look after things, like of that, and maybe to make the people think we ain't taken this nigger away.

MR. LUTZ

And that there goes for the deputy, just like the sheriff.

MR. GILL

And anyway, one of them fellows up to the penitentiary, why he would maybe be glad to pull the trap anyhow.

MR. SOLLERS

How do you mean?

MR. GILL

I mean if you don't do it, Sheriff, this here means

THE SHERIFF

a hundred dollars for somebody. You forgot they give a hundred dollars to the one pulls the trap.

MR. LUTZ

Say, that's twice tonight you thought of something. You better lay off, else maybe you're going to sprain your nut.

MR. SOLLERS

The one that hangs this here nigger, why, he's welcome to the hundred dollars.

MR. LUTZ

Why, sure. If you use your bean a little bit, you ain't got nothing to worry about.

MR. SOLLERS

And then another thing, maybe that nigger wasn't looking for me nohow, but — just looking for his friend, the one we ain't hung yet. And if we get that one hung over to the penitentiary, why then we get both of them to hell outen this jail. . . . Boys, I mean I'm going to sleep easy tonight for the first time in a month and a half.

MR. LUTZ

I'll sleep easy when I see that haunt laid.

MR. SOLLERS

Well, let's get at it. [*He unhooks the telephone.*] Hello, gimme long distance. . . . Long distance? I

OUR GOVERNMENT

want to speak to the State penitentiary. Yes, this is Sheriff Sollers talking. . . .

MR. GILL

Well, boys, I sure have pulled you out of a bad hole, ain't I?

CHAPTER XI
TOWN GOVERNMENT
THE COMMISSIONERS

CHAPTER XI TOWN GOVERNMENT

THE COMMISSIONERS

The office of the Town Commissioners, second floor, Water Witch Fire Engine House. It is an afternoon in May. The members of the board, who are Mr. Hinsch, chairman, and Messrs. Matchett and Oyster, have just returned from lunch after a public hearing which lasted all morning; and are now about to go into executive session, from which, of course, the public is excluded.

MR. HINSCH

Well, gentlemen, the way I get it, we got to act on this matter of a pension for Scotty Akers, what I mean, for his family. And I say le's not have no more bum argument like we had this morning. It's too dam hot.

MR. MATCHETT

I never seen the beat of them people, a-whooping and a-hollering and a-carrying on, the way they done.

MR. OYSTER

And it don't make no difference which way we settle it, we got one side or the other sore as hell at us.

OUR GOVERNMENT

MR. HINSCH

That's right. It don't make no difference what we do, we got ourself in Dutch.

MR. MATCHETT

And us only trying to do the right thing.

MR. HINSCH

It's this here goddam fight that makes all the trouble.

MR. OYSTER

This here fight makes it bad. Wonder why the hell Scotty couldn't of been squirting water in the fire when that string-piece beaned him, 'stead of on them Water Witches.

MR. MATCHETT

Scotty sure was a caution, thataway.

MR. HINSCH

How come that fight to get started? I ain't never got that straight in my head yet.

MR. OYSTER

Scotty started it.

MR. MATCHETT

Yep, Scotty started it, just like he always done.

MR. OYSTER

You see, when them Semper Fidelises drives up in

THE COMMISSIONERS

their truck, they finds them Water Witches already at the fire. Well, Scotty, he was driving the Semper Fidelises' truck. And soon as he seen them Water Witches, he hollers out: "Hell, ain't you got the fire out yet? Get out of the way and let some firemen get to it."

MR. MATCHETT

That's what Scotty said. I was there and I heard him.

MR. HINSCH

It's a wonder Scotty couldn't of shut up once in a while. I always did say Scotty could of shut his trap and improved hisself.

MR. OYSTER

And with that them Water Witches turns the hose on the Semper Fidelises. And they had a fight. And right in the middle of it the roof of the house that was on fire falls in and a string-piece beans Scotty on the head. And when they pick him up he's dead.

MR. MATCHETT

And the house burns down.

MR. OYSTER

That's the hell of it, the house burns down.

MR. HINSCH

What I say, if them two companies got to have a fight

OUR GOVERNMENT

every time they go to a fire, why can't they put the fire out first and then have the fight coming back?

MR. MATCHETT

That's the way them Eyetalians does when two funerals has a race. They always race coming *back* from the graveyard. That there is a better way. It stands to reason.

MR. OYSTER

You would think them boys would stop to think that a house costs money. And them trucks costs money, too.

MR. HINSCH

And here we got all them Semper Fidelises saying the town had ought to pay Scotty's family a pension, account of him getting beaned like you might say in the line of duty, and all them Water Witches says it's a hell of a note to sock a pension on the taxpayers, account of Scotty being the one that started the fight. And it don't make no difference which way we settle it, we got ourself in Dutch.

MR. MATCHETT

A fellow don't hardly know what to do.

MR. HINSCH

Them companies wasn't so bad before this here Rotary Club butted in with all their lovey-dovey stuff.

THE COMMISSIONERS

MR. MATCHETT

Why, no! What I mean, they had a fight now and then, but they didn't have nobody get killed or no house burn down, like of that.

MR. OYSTER

But them Rotarys wasn't satisfied. They had to get up a association and have all the firemen belong to it, so them two companies would love one another. Who the hell ever hear tell of a couple of fire companies that love one another?

MR. HINSCH

I don't think much of that stuff. You got to have competition.

MR. OYSTER

And come to find out, they love each other so dam much they had a fight and the house burns down. And Scotty gets killed.

MR. HINSCH

Them Rotarys makes me sick. Why the hell does them fellows belong to a order like that?

MR. MATCHETT

I hear a fellow say they don't pay no benefits nor nothing.

MR. OYSTER

That's right. Jim Peasely, that was president last

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year, told me so hisself. They ain't got no insurance or nothing like that.

MR. MATCHETT

And they ain't got no regalia.

MR. OYSTER

And then another thing, why don't they have their meetings at night? Daytime ain't no time for a order to meet. I'd like to see them try to pull off a initiation, what I mean, a real initiation, with a big class of candidates, like that, in the daytime. Why, you couldn't do it.

MR. MATCHETT

All they got is a password.

MR. OYSTER

Password? Why, hell, they ain't got a password no more than a snowbird has. They got a motto, that's all they got. "Serve yourself," or something like that, I forget just what it is. But not no regular password, not even a grip.

MR. HINSCH

Is that right?

MR. MATCHETT

I swear to God, I never knowed that. I thought they had a password and a grip.

THE COMMISSIONERS

MR. HINSCH

Ain't they got nothing at all?

MR. OYSTER

Not a dam thing! And to hear them fellows talk, and read them pieces in the paper, you would think it was something.

MR. HINSCH

When I go in a order, I want something for my money.

MR. MATCHETT

Me too. I'm in the Junior Order and Heptasophs now, and before long—well, I reckon you boys know what I got my eye on. I hope to get took in the Odd Fellows.

MR. OYSTER

Shall we tell him, Hinsch?

MR. HINSCH

Go ahead and tell him.

MR. OYSTER

We got a little surprise for you, Matchett. It's all fixed up for you with the Odd Fellows. They act on it next meeting. Fact of the matter the committee has already passed on it.

MR. MATCHETT

Is that right! . . . Well, boys, that there was sure

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some surprise, and I tell you it makes a fellow sure feel good. I kind of had an idea, but a fellow can't never be sure.

MR. OYSTER

Yep, she's all fixed up. You'll be right on the steamboat when this summer's excursion pulls out.

MR. MATCHETT

It sure does make a fellow feel good.

MR. HINSCH

What I say, if them Rotarys hadn't of butted in with this here Buddy Association, everything would of been all right. Them firemen didn't need no association. They ought to of kept them companies separate. But then they get in this here bum argument about what color plumes they're going to have on their hats and then everything is balled up like hell.

MR. OYSTER

That there is a hot thing to have a argument about, ain't it, what color plumes they're going to have? My God! What difference does it make what color plumes they have? They could have green plumes and it wouldn't make no difference to me.

MR. HINSCH

Me neither. But I say them Water Witches had one thing on their side. White plumes gets dirty awful quick.

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MR. OYSTER

Well, Hinsch, I say it's according as according. If a fellow takes care of his hat right, what I mean, not make no football outen it and use it to dust off the back porch, why them plumes stays clean about as long as a man could expect. Me, I kind of like them white plumes. They show off good on parade.

MR. HINSCH

They don't show off as good as red plumes. A fellow can see a red plume a long ways off.

MR. OYSTER

The trouble with them red plumes was that Myersville had them.

MR. HINSCH

Myersville ain't got no red plumes no more. They changed them to blue this year.

MR. OYSTER

I know they changed them, but the trouble is, nobody out in the State don't know about it. What them Semper Fidelises was thinking about was the State carnival. Them boys is taken first prize on appearance for three years now, and they didn't want nobody getting them mixed up with Myersville. Well, yes, it's a shame the way things is all shot to hell since them Rotarys butted in the way they done. Them companies ain't got no more show at the carnival now than a snowball in hell.

OUR GOVERNMENT

MR. HINSCH

I hear them Semper Fidelises ain't going down to the carnival if they don't get what they want for Scotty Akers.

MR. OYSTER

Yeah, I hear that too. First time in fifteen years we ain't had two companies at the carnival. I would think them Rotarys would be ashamed of theirsself.

MR. MATCHETT

Well, boys, this sure is good news. What I say, a fellow had ought to go in the Junior Order first. The place for a young fellow is in the Junior Order. Then, when he gets so's he can take on another one, he ought to get took in the Heptasophs. Anyway, that's what I done, and if I had the thing to do over again, I would do it the same way. Then, when he gets a little older and he knows where he's at, it's time to get took in the Odd Fellows. Ain't that right?

MR. HINSCH

A fellow hadn't ought to be in no hurry about the Odd Fellows. Junior Order first, I say.

MR. OYSTER

It don't pay to be in no hurry.

MR. HINSCH

Fact of the matter, Oyster, I ain't never got it

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straight in my head whether Scotty died in line of duty or not. That there is a question.

MR. OYSTER

The way I look at it, Scotty was there when the bell rang. Then Scotty drove the truck out and got to the fire. And he was at the fire. We know that much, and there can't be no argument about it. Well, suppose Scotty had of been squirting water on the fire? The string-piece might of beaned him just the same.

MR. HINSCH

That's so, all right. Fact of the matter, you might say the string-piece would of been more libel to of beaned him if he was squirting water on the fire than like it was. A fellow runs a awful risk, taking a hose in close on a fire when it gets started good.

MR. OYSTER

And then another thing. Take where Scotty was standing. He didn't have to pull that nozzle in close to the fire like that, just to sock it on them Water Witches. It looks to me like Scotty was just getting ready to turn it on the fire anyhow.

MR. HINSCH

That's right. I was thinking about that myself.

MR. OYSTER

And then, it don't make no difference if Scotty

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started the fight, he helped to put out a whole lot of fires, and a fellow don't hardly know which fire he's going to get killed at.

MR. HINSCH

It's just like lynching a nigger. Some of them says you ought not to lynch him, account of maybe he ain't the right nigger, but I always say if a nigger hadn't ought to be lynched for one thing he ought to be lynched for something else he done, so it don't pay to figure it down too close. It's just the same way with Scotty. He might of got beaned some other time.

MR. OYSTER

Or later on, maybe.

MR. HINSCH

Of course, I ain't saying Scotty didn't make a whole lot of trouble the way he talked. If Scotty could of kept his trap shut he would of been a hell of a sight better fellow.

MR. OYSTER

Scotty had a plenty to say all right. But in a way you might say he done a lot for the town.

MR. HINSCH

I say anybody that went to fires regular like Scotty done, why, he done a lot for the town, even if he did have a lot to say.

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MR. OYSTER

If it was only me, I would say pay the pension, and glad to do it.

MR. HINSCH

That's right. I would be the first one to vote for it.

MR. OYSTER

The trouble is them goddam Water Witches.

MR. HINSCH

Them Water Witches sure would raise hell. And what makes it bad, them Water Witches is all from the upper end of town and they pay the taxes.

MR. OYSTER

Them Semper Fidelises ain't got no money.

MR. HINSCH

Most of them Semper Fidelises pays rent. It's them Water Witches owns the property, or their people does.

MR. OYSTER

They pay rent when they pay it. I swear to God, I don't see how half of them boys gets along.

MR. HINSCH

Now what I say, it ain't nothing against them boys that they're poor people, like of that. But when them

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people that pays taxes comes in here and puts up a holler, why you got to pay some attention to it.

MR. OYSTER

They put up a holler all right. You could hear them a mile. They plumb wore me out.

MR. MATCHETT

There wasn't no trouble about it, was there? What I mean, nobody didn't drop no blackball against me, did they?

MR. HINSCH

Not a one.

MR. OYSTER

I don't believe I ever saw a application go through as quick as hisn, did you, Hinsch?

MR. HINSCH

Same as a greased pig.

MR. MATCHETT

You know what I would tell them Rotarys if they was to come along and ask me to get in it? I'd tell them to go plumb to hell. The Odd Fellows is good enough for me.

MR. HINSCH

I wouldn't stay up late nights waiting for them to ask you to get in it. They wouldn't have such a no-account piece of trash as you in it.

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MR. OYSTER

Oh no! Them Rotarys is a sassiety order. A-setting around the lunch table, making speeches and trying to make out like they knowed what all the tools was for.

MR. HINSCH

They brung Jim Peasely a bowl of water to wash the fish smell offen his fingers and he drunk it.

MR. OYSTER

Thought it was soup.

MR. MATCHETT

Don't it beat all, the way them fellows does? I wouldn't trade off one good order, like the Odd Fellows, for a dozen of them Rotarys.

MR. OYSTER

It's a wonder them Rotarys wouldn't help finish what they started. But nobody ain't heard a word out of them since this trouble started.

MR. HINSCH

Then there's another way to look at it. If we listen to them Water Witches and don't allow no pension, why, then we got all them Semper Fidelises saying Scotty got killed in line of duty, same as a soldier, and the town won't do nothing for him.

MR. OYSTER

Say, Hinsch. That there is what they said, ain't it? "Same as a soldier." That there gives me a idea.

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MR. HINSCH

I hope to hell somebody's got a idea. I ain't.

MR. OYSTER

Hinsch, next Tuesday come a week is Decoration Day. Well, why not us get up a resolution, what I mean a real fancy resolution, saying Scotty died in line of duty same as a soldier, and appropriate some money to put a wreaf on his grave Decoration Day, and then say all the firemen had ought to have a festival to raise some money for Scotty's family. How's that hit you?

MR. HINSCH

That ain't so bad. How much is wreaves?

MR. OYSTER

They put up as pretty a wreaf as you want to see for twenty-five dollars. The town can afford twenty-five dollars.

MR. HINSCH

Them Water Witches couldn't hardly put up no squawk on twenty-five dollars. And that there would certainly help to satisfy them Semper Fidelises. They can make a whole lot of money on a festival, this time of year, if everybody gets out and works.

MR. OYSTER

And then we could put in that the commissioners has looked up the law and found it ain't legal for the town

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to pay out a pension for Scotty. That there would make it look like we wanted to pay out a pension, only we couldn't.

MR. HINSCH

That's right. And so far as that goes, they ain't none of us don't want to see something done for Scotty's family.

MR. OYSTER

You and me was just saying if it was only us, we would give a pension and glad to do it.

MR. HINSCH

And fact of the matter is, I ain't no ways sure the commissioners is got power to pay out a pension. I ain't said nothing about it, but if them Water Witches was to take it to court, I don't believe it would stand up.

MR. OYSTER

Why, Hinsch, it stands to reason it ain't legal. Them is the things people never think about.

MR. HINSCH

That's right. What makes me sick is this here no-account element, always kicking and putting up a hol-ler, and you try to please them, and nothing ever suits them, and come to find out, they don't know what they want.

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MR. OYSTER

And then another thing. We'll put in that them Rotarys had ought to help out with the festival. They done raised so much hell, now let them do a little work.

MR. HINSCH

That's right. Now le's get this here resolution wrote up. This here has got to be a pretty good resolution, what I mean, not no regular resolution, but a fancy one, if it's going to do the work. You write it.

MR. OYSTER

Not me. I ain't much on writing. You write it.

MR. HINSCH

All right.

[He sighs, and slowly collects pen and paper. Presently he starts to write. Mr. Oyster lights a cigar and watches him. Mr. Matchett dreamily looks out the window.]

MR. MATCHETT

[After a very long time, in the tempo of the intermezzo out of Cavalleria Rusticana.]

Boys . . . I tell you there ain't nothing will do as much for a fellow . . . as a good fraternal order. . . . If I was a young fellow . . . first thing I would join . . . would be the Junior Order . . . then the Hepta-

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sophs . . . or maybe the Red Men . . . then . . . the Odd Fellows. . . . You can't beat a good order . . . to help a young fellow along. . . . Take, for instance . . . if you was to land broke . . . in some town . . . them lodge brothers . . . wouldn't never let you jump no freight . . . to get home. . . . I remember one time . . . over in Myersville . . . I lost forty-seven dollars . . . at a shell game . . . in the county fair . . . and when I got done . . . I didn't have a dam nickel . . . to buy myself a hot dog with . . . and the Junior Order seen me through. . . . You can't beat a good order . . . to help a young fellow . . . along. . . .

MR. HINSCH

I got something wrote out here. But it seems to me it's too dam long.

MR. OYSTER

Why, hell, it ought to be long. That pleases a whole lot of people. Read it.

MR. HINSCH [*in an impressive voice*]

"Whereas, in the wisdom of Almighty God"—

MR. OYSTER

That's the stuff.

MR. HINSCH

—"there has been taken from our midst one of our most valuable and beloved citizens, Winfield Scott

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Akers, snatched to his reward from the bosom of a sorrowing wife and five small children" —

MR. OYSTER

Six.

MR. HINSCH

Did Scotty have another kid? Dam, I never knowed that. — "A sorrowing wife and six small children, but done his duty to the last, in the manner of a soldier on the field of battle" —

MR. OYSTER

Them Semper Fidelises will eat that up.

MR. HINSCH

—"in order that precious property might be saved from the flames, and might of been, except for things not under human control" —

MR. OYSTER

That kind of makes that goddam fight look better.

MR. HINSCH

"—and whereas public-spirited citizens has appeared before the Board at a public hearing, whereof due notice was given three days in advance, according to law, and petitioned that the sorrowing family of the said beloved brother, Winfield Scott Akers, be given a pension of thirty-five dollars a month" —

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MR. OYSTER

I would put in that we would of give it anyhow, only it was illegal.

MR. HINSCH

I got that in here — “and whereas the Board is fully of the same sentiment in regards to the matter, and believe the sorrowing family of the said beloved brother, Winfield Scott Akers, is entitled to a pension, but regret to note, after looking up the charter, that the Board has not got power to grant same, unless amended” —

MR. OYSTER

I would cross out that “unless amended.” We don’t want them Semper Fidelises trying to amend the charter. Things is bad enough like they are.

MR. HINSCH

That’s right — “therefore be it resolved, that the Board appropriates the sum of twenty-five dollars for a wreaf to be placed on the grave of the said beloved brother, Winfield Scott Akers, May 30, Decoration Day, account of him dying in line of duty, same as a soldier, and hereby calls on both fire companies to hold a parade and lay the said wreaf on the grave, and further recommends that a festival be held that night, to be assisted in by both fire companies and all fraternal orders and civic societies, and that the Rotary Club take charge of same and see it is put over right. And be it further resolved, that this resolution be spread on the

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minutes of the Board and a copy sent to the sorrowing family of the said beloved brother, Winfield Scott Akers, and advertised in the press. Done under our hand and seal." How's that?

MR. OYSTER

Seems to me we could get some more fancy stuff in it. Something like "born aloft to his reward for his labors on this earth." Only Scotty never labored none, if he could help it.

MR. HINSCH

I'm going to write the first part over again. I got some Odd Fellow resolutions home that has got some good stuff in them.

MR. OYSTER

That's right. Some of them Memorial Service resolutions would have a whole lot of that stuff in them.

MR. HINSCH

Well, that fixes it, don't it? Dam, I sure thought they had us in a hole for a while. Now let them goddam Rotary buttinskis take off their coat and go to work.

MR. OYSTER

That there'll fix them.

MR. MATCHETT

Boys, did you ever stop to think what a real good fraternal order can do for a man?

CHAPTER XII

*THE MILITARY FORCES OF THE
UNITED STATES*

CHAPTER XII

THE MILITARY FORCES OF THE UNITED STATES

I been ask did I get a D. S. C. in the late war, and the answer is no, but I might of got one if I had not run into some tough luck. And how that was is pretty mixed up, so I guess I better start at the beginning, so you can get it all straight and I will not have to do no backtracking.

On the 26th of September 1918, when the old 79th Division hopped off with the rest of the A. E. F. on the big drive that started that morning, the big job ahead of us was to take a town name of Montfaucon, and it was the same town where the Crown Prince of Germany had his P. C.¹ in 1916, when them Dutch was hammering on Verdun and he was watching his boys fight by looking up at them through a periscope. And our doughboys was in two brigades, the 157th and 158th, with two regiments in each, and the 157th Brigade was in front. But they ain't took the town. Because it was up on a high hill, and on the side of the hill was a whole lot of pill-boxes and barbed wire what made it a tough job. Only I ain't seen none of that, because I spent the whole day on the water-wagon, along with another guy, name of

¹ Post of command, a field headquarters. In military operations it is moved frequently, as conditions require.

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Armbruster,² and we was driving it up from the Division P. C. what we left to the Division P. C. where we was going. And that there weren't so good, because neither him, me, nor the horse hadn't had no sleep, account of the barrage shooting off all night, and every time we come to one of them sixteen-inch guns going through the woods and a Frog would squat down and pull the cord, why the horse would pretty near die and so would we. But some time we seen a little of what was going on, like when a Dutch aviator come over and shot down four of our balloons and then flew over the road where we was and everybody taken a shot at him, only I didn't because I happen to look at my gun after I pulled the bolt and it was all caked up with mud and I kind of change my mind about taking a shot.

So after a while we come to a place in a trench and they said it was the new Division P. C., and Ryan,³ who was the stable sergeant, come along and took the horse, and we got something to eat and there was still plenty shelling going on, but not bad like it was, and we figured we could get some sleep. So then it was about six o'clock in the evening. But pretty soon Captain Madeira,⁴ he come to me and says I was to go on duty. And what I was to do was to go with another guy, name of

² Wagoner George Armbruster, Headquarters Troop, 79th Division.

³ Stable Sergeant Lucius K. Ryan, Headquarters Troop, 79th Division.

⁴ Captain Edward W. Madeira, commanding officer, Headquarters Troop, 79th Division.

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Shepler,⁵ to find the P. C. of the 157th Brigade, what was supposed to be 1,000 yards west of where we was, and then report back. And why we was to do that was so we could find the Brigade P. C. in the night and carry messages to it. Because us in the Headquarters Troop, what we done in the fighting was act as couriers and all like of that, and what we done in between the fighting was curry horse belly. So me and Shepler started out. And as the Brigade P. C. was supposed to be 1,000 yards west, and where we was was in a trench, and the trench run east and west, it looked like all we had to do was follow the trench right into where the sun was setting and it wouldn't be no hard job to find what we was looking for.

And it weren't. In about ten minutes we come to the Brigade P. C., and there was General Nicholson,⁶ and his aides, and a bunch of guys what was in Brigade Headquarters, all sitting around in the trench. But they was moving. They was all set to go forwards somewheres, and had their packs with them.

"Well," says Shep, "we ain't got nothing to do with that. Le's go back."

"Right," I says. But then I got to thinking. "What the hell good is it," I says, "for us to go back and tell them we found this P. C., when in a couple of minutes there ain't going to be nobody in it?"

⁵ Horseshoer Ross Shepler, Headquarters Troop, 79th Division.

⁶ Brigadier-General William J. Nicholson, commanding officer, 157th Infantry Brigade.

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"What the hell good is the war?" says Shep. "We was told to find this P. C. and we've found it. Now we go back and let them figure out what the hell good it is."

"This P. C.," I says, "soon as the General clears out, is same as a last year's bird's nest."

"That's jake with me," says Shep. "In this man's army you do what you're told to do, and we've done it. We ain't got nothing to do with what kind of a bird's nest it is."

"No," I says, "we ain't done it. We was told to find a P. C. And soon as Nick gets out, this ain't going to be no P. C., but only a dugout. We got to go with him. We got to find where his new P. C. is at, and then we go back."

"Well, if we ain't done it," says Shep, "that's different."

So in a couple minutes Nick started off, and we went with him, and a hell of a fine thing we done for ourself that we ain't went back in the first place, like Shep wanted to do. Because where we went, it weren't over no road and it weren't through no trench. It was straight up toward the front line over No Man's Land, and a worse walk after supper nobody ever took this side of hell. How we went was single file, first Nick, and then them aides, and then them Headquarters guys, and then us. About every fifty yards a runner would pick us up and point the way and then fall back and let us pass. And what we was walking over was all shell-holes and barbed wire, and you was always slipping down and

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busting your shin, and then all them dead horses and things was laying around, and you didn't never see one till you had your foot in it, and then it made you sick. And dead men. The first one we seen was in a trench, kind of laying up against the side, what was on a slant. And he was sighting down his gun just like he was getting ready to pull the trigger, and when you come to him you opened your mouth to beg his pardon for bothering him. And then you didn't.

Well, we went along that way for a hell of a while. And pretty soon it seemed like we wasn't nowheres at all, but was slugging along through some kind of black dream what didn't have no beginning and didn't have no end, and them goddam runners look like ghosts what was standing there to point, only we wasn't never going to get where they was pointing nor nowheres else.

But after a while we come to a road and on the side of the road was a piece of corrugated iron. And Nick, soon as he come to that, unslung his musette bag and sat down on it. And then all them other guys sat down too. So me and Shep, we figured on that awhile, because at first we thought they was just taking a rest, but then Shep let on it looked like to him they was expecting to stay awhile. So then we went up to Nick.

"Sir," I says, "is this the new Brigade P. C.?"

"Who are you?" he says.

"We're from Division Headquarters," I says. "We was ordered to find the Brigade P. C. and report back."

"This is the new P. C.," he says.

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"This piece of iron?" I says.

"Yes," says he.

"Thank you, sir," I says, and me and Shep saluted and left him.

"A hell of a looking P. C.," says Shep, soon as we got where he couldn't hear us.

"A hell of a looking P. C. all right," I says, "but it's pretty-looking alongside of that trip we got going back."

"I been thinking about that," he says.

So then we sat down by the road a couple of minutes.

"Listen," he says. "I ain't saying I like that trip none. But what I'm thinking about is suppose we get lost. I don't mind telling you I can't find my way back over them shell-holes."

"I got a idea," I says.

"Shoot," he says.

"This here road we're setting on," I says, "must go somewheres."

"They generally do," he says.

"If we can find some place what's on one end of it," I says, "I can take you back if you don't mind a little walking. Because I know all these roads around here like a book." And how that was was because I had been on observation post before the drive started, and had to study them maps, and even if I hadn't never been on the roads, I knowed how they run.

"I'll walk with you to sun-up," he says, "if it's on a road and we know where we're going. But I ain't going

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to try to get back over that No Man's Land, boy, I'll tell you that. Because I just as well try to fly."

So we asked a whole lot of guys did they know where the road run, and not none of them knowed nothing about it. But pretty soon we found a guy in the engineers, what was fixing the road, and he said he thought the road run back to Avocourt.

"Le's go," I says to Shep. "I know where we're at now."

So we started out, and sure enough after a while we come to Avocourt. And I knowed there was a road run east from Avocourt over the ridge to Esnes, if we could only figure out which the hell way was east. So the moon was coming up about then, and we remembered the moon come up in the east, and we headed for it and hit the road. And a bunch of rats come outen a trench and begun going up the road in front of us, hopping along in a pretty good line, and Shep said they was trench camels, and that give us a laugh, and we felt better. And pretty soon, sure enough, we come to Esnes, and turned left, and in a couple minutes we was right back in the Division P. C. what we had left after supper, and it weren't much to look at, but it sure did feel like home.

II

Well, we weren't no sooner there than a bunch of guys begun to holler out to Captain Madeira that here we was, and he come a-running, and if we had of been a

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letter from home he couldn't of been more excited about us. "Thank God you're come," he says.

"Sure we've come," says Shep; "you wasn't really worried about us, was you?"

But I seen it was more than us the Captain was worrying about, so I says: "What's the matter?"

"General Nicholson has broken liaison," he says, "and we've got not a way on earth to reach him unless you fellows can do it."

"Well, I guess we can, hey, kid?" I says to Shep.

But Shep shook his head. "Maybe you can," he says. "But I ain't got no more idea where we been than a blind man. I'll keep you company, though, if you want."

"Company hell," says the Captain. "Here," he says to me, "you come in and see the General."

So he brung me into the dugout what was the P. C. to see General Kuhn.⁷ And most of the time the General was a pretty snappy-looking soldier. He was about medium size, and he had a cut to his jaw and a swing to his back what look like them pictures you see in books. But he weren't no snappy-looking soldier that night. He hadn't had no shave, and his eyes was all sunk in, and no wonder. Because when the division ain't took Mont-faucon that day, like they was supposed to, it balled everything up like hell. It put a pocket in the American advance, a kind of a dent, what was holding up the works all along the line. And the General was getting

⁷ Major-General Joseph E. Kuhn, commanding general, 79th Division.

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hell from Corps, and he had lost a lot of men, and that was why he was looking like he was.

"Do you know where General Nicholson is?" he says to me, soon as Captain Madeira had told him who I was.

"Yes, sir," I says, "but I don't think *he* does."

Now what the General said to that I ain't sure, but he mumbled something to hisself what sound like he be damned if he did either.

"I want you to take a message to him," he says.

"Yes, sir," I says.

So he commenced to write the message. And while I was standing there I was so sleepy everything look like it was turning around, like them things you see in a dream. It was a couple of aides in there, and maybe a orderly, and Captain Madeira, and it was in behind a lot of blankets, what they wet and hang over the door of a dugout to keep out gas. And in the middle of it was General Kuhn, writing on a pad in lead pencil, and I remember thinking how old he looked setting there, and then that would blank out and I couldn't see nothing but his whiskers, and then that would blank out and I would be thinking it was pretty tough on him, and I would do my best to help him out. It weren't no more than a minute, mind. Why I was thinking all them things jumbled up together was because I hadn't had no sleep.

"All right," he says to me; "listen now while I read it to you."

And why they read it to you is so if you lose it you can tell them what was in it and you ain't no worse off.

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And he hadn't no sooner started to read it than I snapped out of that dream pretty quick. Because it was short and sweet. It said that Nick was to attack right away soon as he got it. And I knowed a little about this Montfaucon stuff from hearing them Brigade guys talk while we was going over No Man's Land, so I knowed I weren't carrying no message what just said good morning.

"Is that clear to you?" he says.

"Yes, sir," I says.

"Deliver that to General Nicholson," he says.

"Yes, sir," I says.

"Captain, give this man a horse. As good a horse as you've got."

"Yes, sir," says the Captain.

"You better ride pretty lively. And report back to me here."

"Yes, sir."

"No, wait a minute. I'm moving my P. C. to Malancourt in the next hour. Do you know where Malancourt is?"

"Yes, sir."

"Hunh," he says, like he meant thank God there was somebody in the outfit what knowed right from left, and I was glad I had studied them maps good like I had and could be some use to him.

"Then report to me in Malancourt." And me and the Captain saluted and went out.

So the Captain took me to Ryan, and Ryan saddled

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me a horse, and while he was doing it Shep come up and begun to talk about the argument we had about whether we was going with Nick or not, and he handed it to me for figuring out the right thing to do, and the Captain said he was goddam proud of us both for carrying out orders with some sense when everybody else act like they had went off their nut and things was all shot to hell, and I felt pretty good. So pretty soon Ryan come with the horse, and I started out, and after I had went about a couple miles it was commencing to get light, so I dug my heels in, because I knowed I didn't have much time.

III

Well, in another five minutes I come to Avocourt. And soon as I rode around the bend I got a funny feeling in my stomach. Because I seen something I had forgot when me and Shep was there, and that was that there was two roads what run from Avocourt up to the front line, one of them running north and the other running northeast, and they kind of forked off from each other in such a way that when you was coming down one of them like we done, you wouldn't notice the other one at all. And I knowed soon as I looked at them that I didn't have no idea which one we had come over and it weren't no way to find out.

So I pulled in and figured. And I closed my eyes and tried to remember how that road had looked when we was coming back down it into Avocourt, with the moon

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rising on our left before we hit the road to Esnes, and that was dam hard, because I was so blotto from not having no sleep that soon as I closed my eyes, all I got was a belling in my ears. But I squinched them up good, and pretty soon it jumped in front of me, how that road looked, and right near Avocourt was a bunch of holes in the middle of it, what look like a tank had got stuck there and dug them up trying to get out. So I opened my eyes and was all set to hit for them holes. But then I knowed I was in for it good. Because in between while we had been over the road, them engineers had surfaced it, and it weren't no holes, because they was all covered up with stone.

But it weren't doing no good sitting on top of the horse figuring, so I picked the right-hand road and started up it. I figured I would go about as far as me and Shep had come, and then maybe I would run into Nick, or somebody that could tell me where he was at or what the right road was to take, and that the main thing was to get a move on. But that there sounds easier than it was. Because once you start out somewheres and get to wondering are you headed right or not, you're bad off and you might just as well be standing still for all you're going to get there.

I kept pushing the horse on, and every step he took I would look around to see if I could see something that me and Shep had seen, and about all I seen was tanks and engineers forking stone, what was what we had saw the night before, but it didn't prove nothing be-

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cause you could see tanks and engineers on any road. And them engineers wasn't no help, because engineers is dumb as hell and then they ain't got nothing to do with fighting outfits and 157th Brigade sound just the same to them as any other brigade, and a hell of a wonder me and Shep had found one the night before that could even tell us which way the road run.

Well, after I had went a ways, about as far as I thought me and Shep had come, and ain't seen a thing that I could say for certain we had seen the night before, and no sign of Nick or his piece of corrugated iron, what might be covered up with stone too for all I knowed, I figured I was on the wrong road sure as hell, and I got a awful feeling that I would have to go back to Avocourt and start over again. Because that order in my pocket, it weren't getting no cooler, I'm here to tell you. It was dam near burning a hole in my leg, and a funny hiccupy noise would come up out of my neck every time I thought of it.

But I went on a little bit further, just to make sure, and then I come to something that I thought straightened me all out. It was a kind of a crossroads, bearing off to the left. And I couldn't remember that we had passed it the night before, so I figured I must of gone wrong when I tooken the right-hand fork at Avocourt. But this road, I thought, will put me right, because it leads right across to the other one and I won't have to lose all that time going back to Avocourt. So I helloed down it, and for the first time since I left Avocourt I

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felt I was going right. And sure enough, pretty soon I come to the other road, and it weren't no new stone on it at that place, so I turned right, towards the front, and started up it. And I worked on the horse a little bit, because without no loose stone under his feet he could go better, and kind of patted him on the neck and talked to him, because he hadn't had no sleep neither and he was tired as hell by this time, and then I lifted him along so he went in a good run. And it weren't quite light yet, and I thought: "Thank God I'll be in time."

IV

So pretty soon I come to some soldiers what wasn't engineers. So I pulled up and hollered out: "Which way to the 157th Brigade P. C.?"

"The what?" they says.

"The 157th Brigade P. C.," I says. "General Nicholson's P. C."

"Never hear tell of it," they says.

"The hell you say," I says. "And you're a hell of a goddam comical outfit, ain't you?"

Because that was one of them gags they had in the army. They would ask a guy what his outfit was, and then when he told them, they would say they never hear tell of it.

So I rode a little further and come to another bunch. "Which way is the 157th Brigade P. C.?" I says. "General Nicholson's P. C.?"

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But they never said nothing at all. Because they was doughboys going up in the lines, and when you hear somebody talk about doughboys singing when they're going up to fight, you can tell him he's a dam liar and say I said so. Doughboys when they're going up in the lines, they look straight in front of them and they swallow every third step and they don't say nothing.

So pretty soon I come to another bunch what wasn't doughboys and I asked them. "Search me, buddy," they says, and I went on. And I done that a couple more times, and I ain't found out nothing. So then I figured it weren't no use asking for the Brigade P. C. no more, because a lot of them guys, they wouldn't never of hear tell of the 157th Brigade even if they was in it, so I figured I would find out what outfit they was in and then I could figure out from that about where I was at. So that's what I done.

"What outfit, buddy?" I says to the next bunch I come to. But all they done was look dumb, so I didn't waste no more time on them, but went on till I come to another bunch, and I asked them.

"A. E. F.," a guy sings out.

"What the hell," I says. "You think I'm asking just for fun?"

"Y. M. C. A.," says another, and I went on. And then all over a sudden I knowed why them guys was acting like that, and why it was was this: Ever since they come to France, they had been told if somebody

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up in the front lines asks you what your outfit is, don't you tell him because maybe he's a German spy trying to find out something. Because of course they wasn't really worried none that I was a German spy. What they was worried about was that maybe I was a M. P. or something what was going around finding out how they was minding the rule, and they wasn't taking no chances. Later on, when a whole hell of a lot of couriers had got lost and the American Army didn't know was it coming or going, they changed that rule. They marked all the P. C.'s good so you could see them, and had arrows pointing to them a couple of miles away so you couldn't get lost. But the rule hadn't been changed that morning, and that was why them guys wouldn't say nothing.

Well, was you ever in a lunatic asylum? That was what it was like for me from that time on. I would ask and ask, and all I ever got was "Y. M. C. A.," or "Company B," or something like that, and it getting later all the time, and me with that order in my pocket. And after a while I thought, well, I got to pretend to be a officer and scare somebody into telling me where I'm at. So the first ones I come to was a captain and a lieutenant setting by the side of the road, and they was wearing bars. But me not having no bars didn't make no difference, because up at the front some officers wore bars, but most of them didn't, and if you take the bars off, one guy without a shave looks pretty much like another. So I went up to them and saluted

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and spoke sharp, like I had been bawling out orders on the parade ground all my life.

“Which way is General Nicholson’s P. C.?” I says, and the Captain jumped up and saluted.

“General Nicholson?” he says. “Not around here I’m pretty sure, sir,” he says.

“Hundred and Fifty-seventh Brigade?” I says, pretty short, like he must be asleep or something if he didn’t know where that was.

“Oh no,” he says. “That wouldn’t be in this division. This is all 37th.”

So then I knowed I was sunk. The 37th Division, it was on our left, and that meant I had been on the right road all the time when I left Avocourt, as I seen many a time since by checking it up on the maps, and had went wrong by wondering about that fork. And it weren’t nothing to do but cut across again and hope I might bump into General Nicholson somehow, and if I didn’t, to keep on beating to Malancourt, so I could report to General Kuhn like I had been told to do. And what I done from then on I ain’t never figured out, even from them maps, because I was thinking about that order all the time, and how it ought to been delivered already if it was going to do any good, and I got a little wild. I put the horse over the ditch and went through the woods and never went back to the crossroads at all. And them woods was all full of shell-holes, so you couldn’t go straight, and the day was still cloudy, so you couldn’t tell by the sun which way you was headed,

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and it weren't long before I didn't know which the hell way I was going. One time I must of been right up with the fighting, because a guy got up out of a shell-hole and yelled at me for Christ sake not go over the top of that hill with the horse, because there was a sniper a little ways away, and I would get knocked off sure as hell. But by that time a sniper, if he only knowed where the hell he was sniping from, would of looked like a brother, so I went over. But it weren't no sniper, because I didn't get knocked off.

And another time I come to the rim of a shell-hole what was so big you could of dropped a two-story house in it, and right new, but it weren't no dirt around it and you couldn't see no place the dirt had went. And right then the horse he wheeled and begun to cut back toward where we had come from. Because he was so tired by then, he was stumbling every step and didn't want to go on. So I had to fight him. And then I got off him and begun to beat him. And then I begun to blubber. And then I begun to blubber some more on account of how I was treating the horse, because he ain't done nothing and it was up to me to make him go.

And while I was standing there blubbering, near as I can figure out, the 313th, what was part of the 157th Brigade, was taking Montfaucon. Because General Kuhn, he ain't sat back and waited for me. Soon as I left him he got on a horse and rode up to the front line hisself, there in the dark, and passed the word over they was to advance, and then relieved a general what didn't

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seem to be showing no signs of life and put a colonel in command of that end of the line, and pretty soon things was moving. So Nick, he got the order that way and went on, and the boys, if they had Nick in command, they would take the town all right. So they took it.

V

It must of been after eleven o'clock when I got in to Malancourt. And there by the side of the road was General Kuhn, all smeared up with mud and looking like hell. And I went up to him and saluted.

"Did you deliver that message?" he says.

"No, sir," I says.

"What!" he says. "Then what are you doing coming in here at this hour?"

"I got lost," I says.

He never said nothing. He just looked at me, starting in from my eyes and going clear down to my feet, and that there was the saddest look I ever seen one man turn on another. And it weren't nothing to do but stand there and hold on to the reins of the goddam horse and wish to hell the sniper had got me.

But just then he looked away quick, because somebody was saluting in front of him and commencing to talk. And it was Nick. And what he was talking about was that Montfaucon had been took. But he didn't no more than get started before General Kuhn started up hisself.

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"What do you mean," he says, "by breaking liaison with me? And where have you been anyway?"

"Where have I been?" says Nick. "I've been taking that position, that's where I've been. And I did not break liaison with you!"

So come to find out, them runners what had showed us the way over No Man's Land was supposed to keep liaison, only it was their first day of fighting, same as it was everybody else's, and what they done was keep liaison with that last year's bird's nest what Nick had left, and didn't get it straight they was supposed to space out a little bit till they reached to the Division P. C.

"And anyway," says Nick, "there was a couple of your own runners that knew where I was. Why didn't you use them?"

So of course that made me feel great.

So then they begun to cuss at each other, and the generals can outcuss the privates, I'll say that for them. So I kind of saluted and went off, and then Captain Madeira, he come to me.

"What's the matter?" he says.

"Nothing much," I says.

"You didn't make it, hey?"

"No. Didn't make it."

"Don't worry about it. You did the best you could."

"Yeah. I done the best I could."

"You're not the only one. It's been a hell of a night and a hell of a day."

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“Yeah, it sure has.”

“Well — don’t worry about it.”

“Thanks.”

So that is how I come not to get no D. S. C. in the late war. If I had of done what I was sent to do, maybe they would of give me one, because Shep, he got cited, and they sure needed me bad. But I never done it, and it ain’t no use blubbering over how things might be if only they was a little different.

A NOTE ON THE TYPE IN WHICH THIS BOOK IS SET

This book is set in a type called Scotch. There is a divergence of opinion regarding the exact origin of this face, some authorities holding that it was first cut by Alexander Wilson & Son, of Glasgow, in 1837, while others trace it back to a modernized Caslon old style brought out by Mrs. Henry Caslon in 1796. Its essential characteristics are sturdy capitals, full rounded lower case letters, the graceful fillet of the serifs and a general effect of crispness.



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